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Table 1. *Mean (SD) values for the dependent variables of the three groups of participants*

Variable	Group 1	Group 2	Group 3
Age (years)	22.1 (1.2)	22.1 (1.2)	22.1 (1.2)
Height (cm)	176.5 (6.5)	176.5 (6.5)	176.5 (6.5)
Weight (kg)	72.5 (10.5)	72.5 (10.5)	72.5 (10.5)
Pre-exercise heart rate (b/min)	72.5 (10.5)	72.5 (10.5)	72.5 (10.5)
Pre-exercise blood pressure (mmHg)	112.5 (10.5)	112.5 (10.5)	112.5 (10.5)
Pre-exercise blood glucose (mmol/L)	5.5 (0.5)	5.5 (0.5)	5.5 (0.5)
Pre-exercise serum insulin (mU/L)	12.5 (2.5)	12.5 (2.5)	12.5 (2.5)
Pre-exercise serum triglycerides (mmol/L)	1.25 (0.25)	1.25 (0.25)	1.25 (0.25)
Pre-exercise serum cholesterol (mmol/L)	5.25 (0.25)	5.25 (0.25)	5.25 (0.25)
Pre-exercise serum HDL cholesterol (mmol/L)	1.25 (0.25)	1.25 (0.25)	1.25 (0.25)
Pre-exercise serum LDL cholesterol (mmol/L)	3.75 (0.75)	3.75 (0.75)	3.75 (0.75)

the 100 g glucose tolerance test. The mean (SD) values for the dependent variables of the three groups of participants are shown in Table 1. The mean (SD) values for the dependent variables of the three groups of participants are shown in Table 1.

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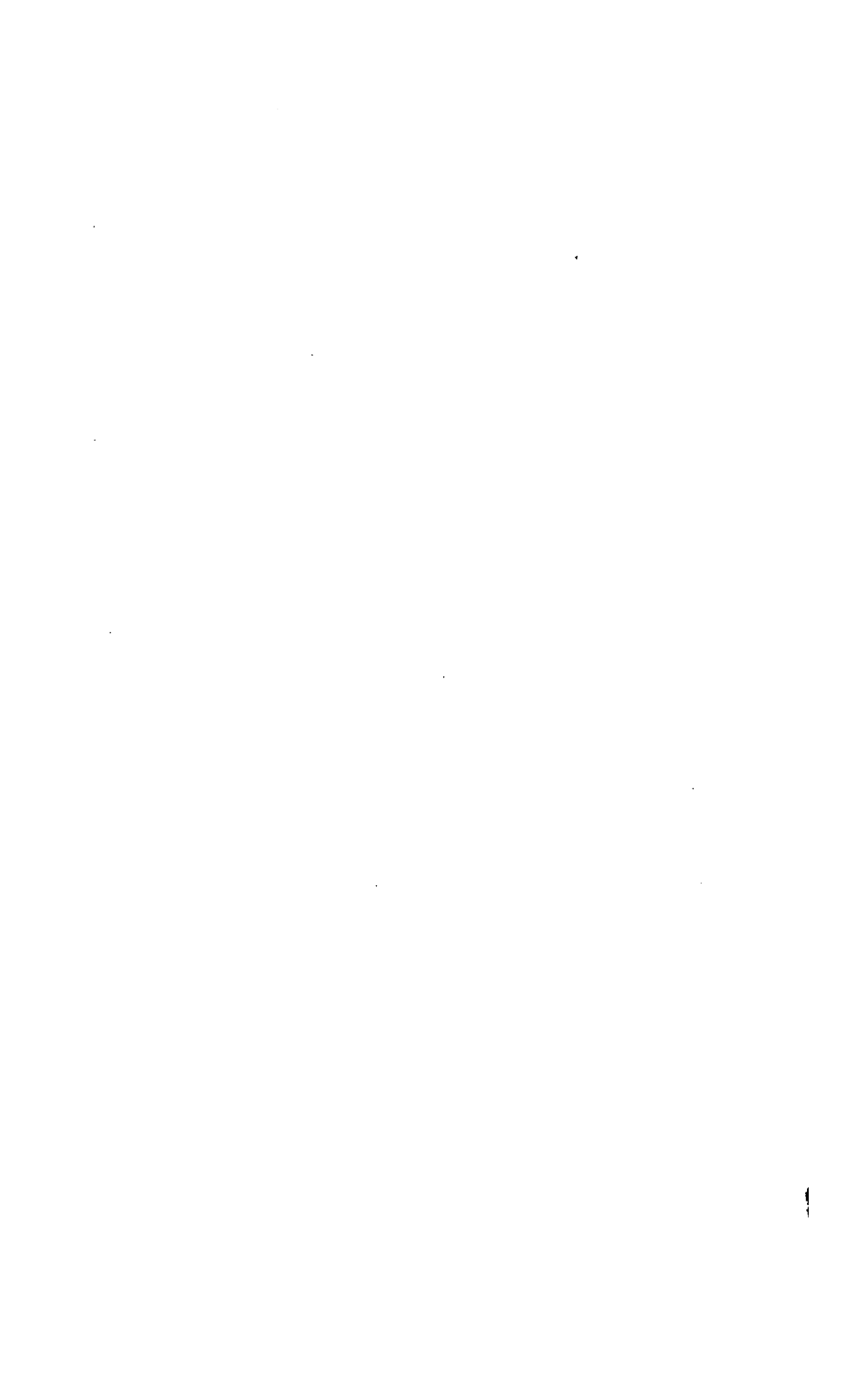
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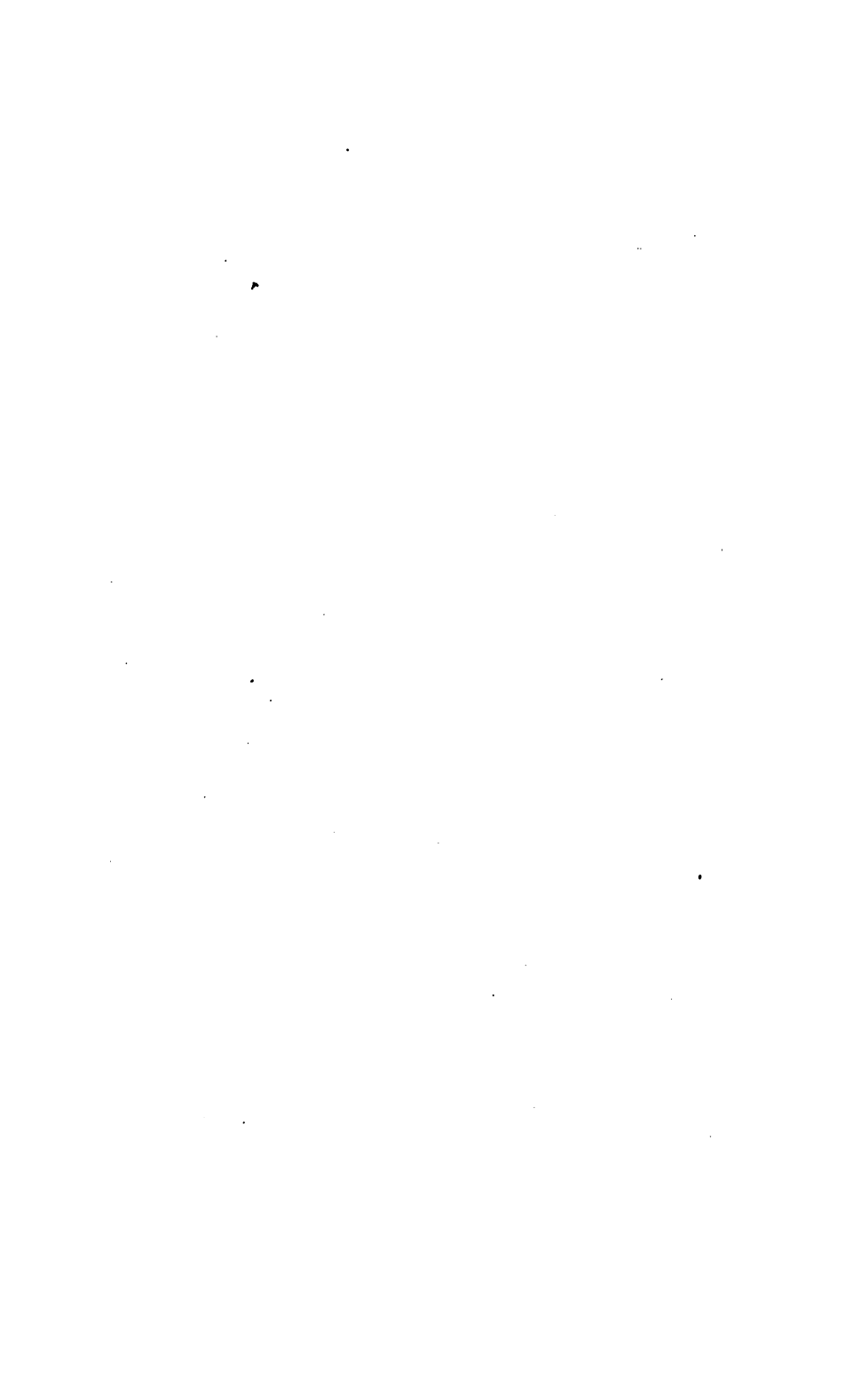
The mean (SD) values for the dependent variables of the three groups of participants are shown in Table 1. The mean (SD) values for the dependent variables of the three groups of participants are shown in Table 1.



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BEHIND THE CURTAIN

A Nobel

BY

HENRY ROBERT ADDISON

IN THREE VOLUMES

VOL. I



LONDON

JOHN MAXWELL AND COMPANY

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TO MY DAUGHTER

GRACE

THE FOLLOWING PAGES ARE

Affectionately Dedicated

BY

HER ATTACHED FATHER

THE AUTHOR.

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OF
THE FIRST VOLUME.

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BEHIND THE CURTAIN

CHAPTER I.

STRANGE COMPANIONS.

WHILE the capricious flittings of fashion have driven the aristocrat and the man of taste from Grosvenor-square to the neighbourhood of Belgravia — while hitherto unnoticed and unfrequented thoroughfares have suddenly sprung up into consequence, and others have sadly fallen from their high estate into mere rendezvous of commerce—the Albany—the dull old Albany, dark and drear, solemn and cheerless, has still preserved that dignified position that she has so long and so proudly maintained. Amid the wreck of all her

former rivals, palatial sets of chambers, lodgings worthy of a princely tenant, have displayed their luxuries to the eye of the wanderer, and wooed the choice of many a man of fashion. Yes! in all the prized attributes of bachelor life, none have yet eclipsed the cloister-like Albany, or weaned a single denizen from her gloomy halls.

Cheerfully paying a high rent, the inhabitants of this desirable location centre all their joys within the immediate precincts of their chambers, and thus the rooms in this privileged spot are furnished with an elegance and richness seldom dreamt of in other apartments.

We will now introduce our readers into one of these snug and luxurious holdings. The lady or the gentleman who peruses these pages is requested to picture to himself or herself the most richly-decorated saloon imaginable, a

bright fire burns gaily in the well-planned stove, the red velvet curtains are drawn so closely that they assist effectually in shutting out the noise caused by the rain which falls on the verandah of the courtyard. On either side the hearth is placed an easy-chair, while between them stands a small marqueterie table, on which a host of unopened letters, an inkstand and other materials for writing, are carefully placed. Over the back of one of the fauteuils is thrown the rich dressing-gown of the owner of these well-appointed rooms. His slippers (the work of some fair lady's hands) are placed before it. This is palpably the seat of him to whom all the surrounding luxuries belong.

But where is he? where is the lord of this earthly paradise? Evidently far from home, for each of the easy-chairs is occupied by a servitor. Than this nothing can be plainer; for while the opposite

seat is filled by a servant in a smart groom's livery, in that of the master lounges one who, though dressed in a plain suit of black, may be at once recognised as a favoured—a confidential valet.

A few words will serve to introduce our narrative.

"So," asked the latter, "your missus has quite determined on giving up my master?"

"Most decidedly, Mr. Coleman; there ain't no doubt about it."

"But I always imagined they were, as it were, engaged to be married?"

"And so they was."

"Well then, John, why does your young lady change?"

"'Cause, Mr. Coleman, your master is also changed."

"*Common, s'il vous plait?*"

"Well, it ain't no secret. When Miss

Windham was a-going to be married to him, he was heir to a hearldom. But now, as his brother has married abroad, and missus don't see no chance of Mr. Sydney becoming a lord, why you see she thinks she can go to a better market."

"Well now, I think as this conduct is *oon pitty poo* shabby. Ain't he as much an Honourable now as when she said 'yes?' Wasn't he (as far as morality goes) just the same then as he is now?—the most strict, proper young gentleman in all England? Hasn't he a good fortune?"

"Honly an allowance from my lord, Mr. Coleman."

"Well, it's all the same; and after all, he may become a nobleman yet. I'm convinced, if he'd only take to the Church, they'd make him a bishop at once. But tell me, Mr. John, do you happen to know—of course I only mean by guess—

what's in the little note you've just brought?"

"Well, Mr. Coleman, I don't mind confessing to you I does. I'll tell you all about it. You must know——"

What he would have added his friend never learnt, for at that moment the magnificent buhl clock on the mantelpiece struck ten, and Coleman jumped up, and, well aware of his master's invariable punctuality, dismissed his companion without the slightest ceremony, an act for which John rather appeared to be obliged than offended, feeling far from desirous of meeting the gentleman to whom he had brought the note.

"*Bon sor,*" said the valet, as he closed the door upon him.

Nor was the step taken prematurely or unnecessarily, for the faithful Coleman had scarcely had time to look over the notes on the table and guess at the names

of their writers as well as their contents, when the knocker sounded loudly, and the next instant the proprietor of the chambers entered, and after exchanging his Poole-built coat and well-made boots for his dressing-gown and slippers—a task in which he was ably assisted by his devoted servitor—he threw himself back in his arm-chair, and for a couple of minutes shut his eyes and preserved silence.

During these few seconds we will slightly sketch the Honourable George Sydney, who now indulges in a waking slumber, occupied by those thoughts which we will hereafter more fully dissect, overcome by the vast exertion of having just addressed a large and critical assembly—a body of the most learned pandits—prizemen in our most severe universities, who frequently congregate in Exeter Hall for the purpose of listening to the finest oratory of the day, ready to

cut to shreds the superficial speaker or the weak champion of peculiar tenets, to quarrel with doubtful arguments, to detect classical errors, to point out false quantities, and crush the nascent spirit unsupported by that confidence which is often alone due to experience. Before this hypercritical assemblage had Sydney often appeared with triumph; he had only now left them, their "idol of the hour."

George Sydney was singularly gifted in every way. The son of the late Earl of Grantchester (raised to an Earldom for his vast abilities as a statesman), the brother of the present wealthy and generous peer, handsome in person, fascinating in manner, proud to that exact degree which renders pride a matter alike of envy and admiration; deeply read, a fine orator, a close arguer, an unequalled linguist; alike the pet of the



drawing-room and the pride of the hunting-field; the arbiter in all matters of taste, a model for every pious Christian, rich, young, and active, gay without flippancy, thoughtful without gloom, the Honourable George Sydney was equally courted by the grave and the gay, the theologist and the politician, the statesman and the flirt—nay, so bright seemed his future prospects that the veriest managing mother in England (and who can equal her in cunning?) would gladly have encouraged his addresses to her handsome daughter, had he deigned to tender them. Yes, such is the youth who now, starting from his reverie, exclaims—

“Coleman, bring me some sherry and seltzer; I feel somewhat fatigued. Has any one called during my absence?”

“No one, sir, of any consequence. The Archbishop sent to remind you of his

grace's assembly next Thursday; the poor man you promised to get into the institution, sent his wife for information; and lastly, Miss Windham's groom came with a note, which I have placed among the others on the table. While you look over them, I'll go and get you the wine and seltzer, sir."

"You may add a small caviare toast. I am really greatly exhausted."

"Yes, sir!" replied the man, quitting the room, but taking care to make no noise in closing the door, for be it well understood that extreme quiet and noiseless obedience always characterize the household of a high-born gentleman. The servant of the nobleman and the flunkey of the parvenu are as widely different in their manners as their masters. The essence of true breeding is quietude; fussyness is the overboiling of wealthy vulgarity. Masters and servants

equally share in these distinctive attributes.

Note after note was examined, but few excited much interest. There was a pressing invitation to join a party of pleasure-seekers to Ascot, which was contemptuously thrown aside; a call for charity was honoured by being placed in George's portfolio; a request to attend at the office of Messrs. Lily and Co. on the following morning caused some slight curiosity; a somewhat warm address accompanying a lovely bouquet was pooh-poohed! and carelessly devoted to the flames; a demand for a considerable amount which immediately followed was treated with anything but levity—the unwelcome request for payment was crushed in the young man's hand as he frowned rather than uttered a deep curse on his impatient creditor—the next moment the painful missive was torn into countless fragments;

last came Miss Windham's note; in it the young lady—the "heartless jilt," as George styled her—requested him to send back some old letters written in her halcyon days of affection, and a beautiful miniature painted by Hawkins. The cool, off-hand style of the letter was wounding to the ambitious young man. He felt that he was not only declined, but scorned, by the fickle heiress; she fairly told him she required her portrait back, as she desired to give it to her future husband, Lord Urmstone; and as his lordship happened to be what is usually designated a steady-going personage, the idol of Exeter Hall felt himself deeply degraded in being thus removed to make way for such a rival. "*A helpless, silly nobleman,*" as George would have described him on the platform; "*an amorous imbecile,*" as he now called him, and then threw down the cold-blooded production.

Coleman now returned, and perceiving, with that acuteness for which his class has ever been famed, that his master was in a bad humour, would, after having placed the wine on the table, have quietly retired, but was stopped by his master's voice.

"Coleman, if any person calls, which is hardly likely at this late hour, deny me. If any letters are left, keep them till morning. I wish to pass a few hours in serious meditation;" and George reached down a volume beautifully bound—so beautifully indeed, that its sacred contents could not be mistaken.

"I'll take care no one disturbs you, sir;" and Coleman again turned towards the door.

"Stay, stay; 'tis not probable, but 'tis just possible, a female may seek admittance."

"A lady, sir?"

“Not exactly a lady”—the valet stared —“not exactly a lady, but a person of the greatest respectability, though moving in a lower sphere of society—that is, I may say, she assists me in dispensing my charities. I wish her always to be admitted when I am at home.”

“Of course, sir, as you desire it.”

“Good night, Coleman,” added his master. The servitor understood the polite dismissal, and instantly left the room. Sydney at once took up the book before him; although we cannot positively read his thoughts, yet to all appearance he was soon deeply immersed in its serious contents. He was not, however, destined to remain long at his studies, in less than ten minutes the servant again appeared.

“The lady—that is, the person, sir, you mentioned, is here; she insists on seeing you.”

“Of course she does—show her in instantly ; and hark you, you may retire to bed. I will see her out.”

Coleman stood amazed. He had ever looked upon his patron as a model of propriety ; here was a decided infraction of all rules of respectability—nay, so shocked was he at this strange procedure, that, had not his master coughed loudly—which was a sure indication of his displeasure—we are by no means certain that he would have complied with the orders given him without remonstrance ; but seeing that the said patron was by no means in a humour to be trifled with, he left the door, muttering as he went along, “She walks like an old ’un—she speaks like an old ’un—she *is* an old ’un—so there can’t be much harm in it.”

In a few seconds more he ushered in a tall female, wrapped in a large loose cloak, and closely veiled, to whom George indi-

cated the opposite fauteuil, and by a motion of his hand invited her to sit. With this invitation she instantly complied, seated herself snugly exactly in front of her host, and fussily settled herself down as the much-excited servant withdrew, wondering who the "strange woman" could be. Nay, so great was his ire, that he afterwards contemplated (as he expressed it himself) turning Mr. Sydney off, lest his own character for high morality might suffer.

For a few instants not a word was spoken ; both parties remained mute, but not equally immovable. George evidently writhed beneath the weight of his emotion ; the female sat bolt upright, motionless as a statue. The former gazed at her earnestly ; his looks bespoke his anxiety to hear her voice. He plainly invited her to speak first ; but the mysterious visitor either purposely or

through ignorance misunderstood the invitation, and remained silent. After a severe struggle, George, by a mighty effort, spoke. His voice, earnest, anxious, though subdued, hissed like a serpent as he asked—

“Is it over?”

“What, sir?” demanded the woman, who now, throwing up her veil, displayed a countenance devoid of a single trace of kindly feeling: her dull, lustreless blue eye; her straight nose; her thin lips, thrown forward by prominent teeth; her deeply-furrowed cheek; her somewhat hanging brow, bespoke her character, and made her hearer, though long accustomed to her looks, almost turn away with disgust as she demanded—“*What, sir?—what over? I really don't quite understand you.*”

“You do, you know you do; drop this cunning game; we are alone—speak plainly.”

"Please, sir, may I take a drop of wine?" asked the other, amply filling her glass. "My walk has flurried me above a bit; besides, these 'ere stone steps are sadly tiring."

"Take a bottle if you like—a cask—anything; but come at once to the point; this dallying is as silly as it is dangerous."

"So I thinks; but you *is* so unreasonable; you don't ask a straightforward question, but says something mysterious, and then flies into a passion with a poor widdler 'cause she don't clearly understand you."

"You understand me well. I *know* you do."

"Well, then, say what it is you wants to know, for I'm rather in a hurry;" and she tossed down another bumper ~~of~~ of Sydney's best sherry.

"I ask you—is it over?"

“Well, if your meaning’s what I supposes it is—mind, I only says I *supposes*,” and to his disgust she winked at her pious entertainer — “if it be *you know what*, it’s not even come on yet.”

“Then, may I ask what brings you here?”

“La, sir, there’s a dozen things; in an affair like this, all should be square and regular.”

“Hush!”

“Right; there be nothing like caution; so, if it pleases you, I’ll just look outside — ‘safe bind, safe find;’” and the woman rose, and, after looking out to see that the coast was clear, coolly bolted the door, and returned to her luxurious seat.

Sydney was by this time thoroughly disgusted with her vulgarity; the elegant, the courted, the proudest member of every circle could ill brook the contamination of this creature’s presence, but he for-

tunately abstained from exhibiting his feelings.

"All's right now!" cried the beldame, throwing herself back, all secure from intruders. "You see, sir, it would be just as bad for *you* as for me, if this little affair got wind; so we can't be too cautious."

The partnership which the *we* implied, cut George to the quick; but, only anxious to get the interview over as soon as possible, he again demanded—

"Once more, my good woman, what brought you here?"

"Good woman, indeed! I don't think that's quite respectful; but never mind, let bygones be bygones; I comed here only to ask you to give me your promise in writing that when I've done as you wished me—mind, not till then, I wants nothing ~~un~~ fair—you'll sign to pay me one hundred pounds."

"Idiot! do you think me mad?" cried George, starting up violently.

"Well, as you likes!" replied his companion; also rising and helping herself to another glass of wine. "If *you* don't care about the affair, I'm sure *I* don't. After all, it's a dangerous job. The Earl's werry hasty, and remarkable 'cute."

The slow and cold utterance of these few words had given George time to see his folly, and he hastened to explain.

"Silence, my good Mrs. Rearden; sit down:" and they both resumed their seats. "Don't speak so loud; and now let us talk quietly over this matter. My only reason for declining to give you a written document, arose from a fear that you might misuse it."

"Well, that's true, and I likes your caution, that's what I do. I don't blame you, by no means; but just look now, if I really wished to injure you,

couldn't I do so without any writing?
couldn't I?"

"Hush!"

"Besides, ain't I now as innocent as an unborn babby? Lord love you, I could have you taken up and punished; while as to *me*, I'd get rewarded for my information. You remember——"

"Nothing, I remember nothing; I said nothing, I will swear I said nothing; and if I deny *it*, I should like to know who'd dare to doubt the word of George Sydney?"

"Oh, if that's your little game, we'll soon see it played out; to-morrow morning I'll——"

"What?" roared the now infuriated young man. "What? speak, or by Heaven I'll annihilate you;" and he rushed towards her.

"No, you wont!" coolly replied the woman, who, without moving from her

seat, had firmly grasped the bell-rope. George saw he was in her power. He at once smothered his irate feeling, and, smiling, said—

“I was only joking, my dear Mrs. Rearden; I too well know your fidelity to fancy for a moment that you would betray an old friend.”

“Oh! honour among thieves!”

Poor Sydney winced, but he affected to laugh at the vulgar aphorism.

“Tell me now—think for a moment—is there no other way by which I can secure your valuable co-operation?”

“Well, I suppose you mean my services. I only see one way—give me fifty pounds, and t’other half when all is over. I shall require it directly, for I want to go to the Continent, to see a relative of mine as is living there.”

“I don’t approve of paying beforehand.”

"Perhaps not; and I don't approve of running my head into a halter without stumpy down; so at once give me the rhino, or the bargain's off."

"I don't believe I have as much in my desk."

"Oh, a cheque will do; I'll get it changed in the morning, and nothing will happen before night—I know when *it* will come on."

George Sydney ground his teeth together; but he did not allow his annoyance to appear. He opened his case, and wrote out a cheque for fifty pounds, and handed it to Mrs. Rearden.

"This will do, I hope?"

"Well, I don't know. You see it's made payable to Mrs. Thompson. Now, you see, I'm not Mrs. Thompson."

• "‘Or bearer,’ payable to any one; such is the form of every cheque. Of course I need not point out to a woman of your

ability, that it would not do to put *your* name to the document. By-the-by, don't take it yourself to the bankers'; send it in by some third person—a man will look best."

"Hum! I understand. If there be anything wrong, I'll let you know early," said Mrs. Rearden, slowly rising from her chair.

"There can be nothing wrong; but, if anything should occur, let me know before eleven o'clock, as at that time I shall go to church."

"Church! *You* go to church! ha! ha! ha!"

"Do make less noise," chimed in Sydney, in a tone of vexation he could not conceal; "do make less noise; the servants are all in bed."

"In bed!" chuckled Mrs. Rearden, who now began to show unmistakable signs of inebriety. "In bed! How funny! I'd like

to go up and pull 'em out; they'd be so astonished. Shall we, eh?"

"For shame, my good friend; you forget that my household is composed of persons of serious respectability: and now, my dear madam, allow me, as our business is over, to see you out. This way, if you please; take care of the mat."

"Lord love ye, Mr. George, what a row you make! Why, I am accustomed to—" here the woman gave a fair stumble. "I am, I say—I say," added she, hiccuping, "yes, I am——"

By this time she was fairly outside the door, which George shut on her; and, as he turned to seek his bed, he offered up a mental prayer, if such a term can possibly be applied to such a wish, that the old hag might break her neck, or die of spontaneous combustion, as soon as she had completed the little job now entrusted to her.

CHAPTER II.

A CANDIDATE FOR PARLIAMENT.

THERE are certain lawyers' offices in Westminster where fitting individuals are selected to represent certain counties and certain boroughs. The rich are invited to take shares in this Parliamentary lottery, the poor are tempted into doing so by pecuniary aid; in either case, talents, and, if possible, good station, are required. These qualifications proved, the whole weight of the highest political party is thrown into the scale, and every effort made by the combined club to secure a seat for the candidate they have thus sent down.

Now, it so happened that a borough—

a borough notorious for its venality, had just become vacant. Votes in the House were about this time nearly balanced; so nearly indeed, that each seat became a prize well worth struggling for. The Liberal party, ever on the alert, made up in activity for the funds which were more amply provided by the aristocratic clique. The latter had naturally become alarmed, and so the high parties were now solemnly assembled at Messrs. Lily and Co.'s for the purpose of nominating their man. Just as the task became most difficult, from serious and conflicting views, George Sydney walked in. Now, when parties disagree in their choice on any one subject, nothing so readily calms the strife as a neutral ground on which their debate may be carried out. The Honourable George Sydney was a man of rank, fortune, and talent, deeply wedded to the Tory interests. Popular with the Church

party for his austere and unbending Protestantism ; beloved by the lower orders for his excessive charity, who could be so fit as he ? To give way in favour of such an eligible candidate was far from a defeat on either side ; so a single word, a look, sufficed to bring the contending politicians to a perfect understanding, and those who had warmly disputed only a moment before now solicited, in friendly union of opinion, the new comer to stand at once for the borough of Trafford.

“ My dear friend,” said Lord Troughton, as he clasped the hand George extended towards him, “ you are the very man for them ; you are sure to get in.”

“ You will have no one to oppose you but a wretched Alderman who has already been beaten more than once.”

George, however, hesitated. He looked solemn, and shook his head.

Now, if we are to believe Sheridan, a shake of the head means a great deal, and so seemed to think those assembled. They had evidently seen Lord Burleigh use this *caput* gesture in the *Critic* with considerable effect, and they hastened to pave the way for the doubting candidate.

"My dear sir, I will guarantee that the expenses will be under 1200*l*," chimed in the wily lawyer.

"No, my lord, I think I must really decline the honour; I have several reasons."

Now, when a man says that he only *thinks* a thing, he is still open to persuasion; so Lord Troughton again pressed forward.

"Consider well, my dear friend," insinuated his lordship.

"Aye, it were a glorious thing for our party," added a *parvenu* who always aimed to attach himself to his superiors.

"I have done so," replied George.
"In the first place, I do not feel quite equal to the fatigues of the House."

"What then, will you do as a peer?" asked one who had hitherto remained silent.

"Oh! I am happy to say there is no chance of that; Lady Grantchester, I rejoice to tell you, hourly expects to be confined, and ere another day elapses I sincerely hope I shall be able to congratulate my dear brother on the birth of an heir."

"That's unlucky for you."

"By no means; I have long desired to see such an event occur. Besides, to tell you the truth—and I hope I never utter anything else—the late hours consequent on a Parliamentary life would sadly interfere with my higher duties."

"Higher duties?" screamed Lord Troughton. "What can be higher

than that of legislating for your country?"

"My lord, my lord, you forget yourself sadly. Pardon me for reminding you that we have duties to perform far more serious and important—there is another and a better world," and George pointed towards Heaven.

"Forgive me, Sydney, forgive me; I forgot your extreme notions on these matters."

"Besides," added George, "to be made emperor of the world I would not lend myself to bribery. The man who squanders his wealth in thus corrupting the best principles of an honest constituency has much to answer for. Alas! his couch must some day be painfully haunted by the recollection. I feel strongly on the subject, very strongly. Nothing should induce me to do that, which I look upon as criminal—a wicked advantage taken by

the rich man over the poor one. Bribery I abhor. Good morning to you, my lord—good morning, gentlemen; I am going to hear the service at the Abbey, the bell is already tolling;" and with these words the man of austere principles left the apartment.

"I hate these canting fellows," exclaimed Lord Troughton as the other shut the door; "I had a great mind to quarrel with him for daring to lecture me."

"We could expect nothing less," observed the lawyer, "from one of the Exeter Hall school—I told you he wouldn't do; so now let us think of some one else," and they again resumed their deliberations.

"Why didn't they offer to pay my expenses, fools that they were? I'd have snapped at it. But of all short-sighted people in the world, the most diabolically

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so are your acute politicians. Ah! here comes the Bishop of London. I must be doubly solemn during the service;" and with this observation George Sydney entered Westminster Abbey.

CHAPTER III.

THE BEREAVED MOTHER.

THERE is a palatial residence, situated within three miles of the metropolis, celebrated for its architectural beauties, the façade displaying a taste which calls forth from all who approach it an inquiry as to the name of him who had so elegantly designed it. The opposite side, which looks into park-like grounds, is equally beautiful, the back windows of the principal floor being within twelve feet of a noble terrace, through which a stone stair rises, and thus gives admission to the banqueting-hall. The rest of the floor is devoted to splendid drawing-rooms and dining-rooms, to which are

attached a library and billiard-room, as well as the sleeping chamber of the noble proprietor.

It was within this mansion that the Countess of Grantchester lay writhing in pain, beneath the lace curtains of her sumptuous couch. Ill-suppressed moans told of those agonies which from time to time assailed her. No rank, no wealth could save her from these—the common lot of all mortality. But a hope of final triumph—a conviction that ere long her sufferings would be amply repaid, checked her every complaint, and she used her best endeavour to conceal her pain, rather than utter a term which might seem ungrateful to the Dispenser of all blessings—the gracious Providence who would probably within an hour grant her ardent prayer, and enable her to press to her bosom a son and heir to the house of Grantchester—a child that would form a

still closer link between herself and her adored husband.

"Your ladyship suffers?" inquiringly suggested the obsequious medical man who stood by her bedside.

"I suffer dreadfully from thirst, my lips and throat are parched; might I not have something to moisten them?"

"Of course you can. Nurse," added he, turning to Mrs. Rearden, who sat close to her employer's pillow, "what drink is provided for her ladyship to take?"

"None, sir; I have none here; but there's some capillaire in the store-closet, and if I might dare to ask you to go down to the study, because the Earl might not like me, as I'm a stranger, to enter there; and if you'd only mix something for my lady, poor dear, blessed martyr, I'm sure it would do her good. In oorse, doctor, I wouldn't

presume to ask you to go, but I knows my lady couldn't bear a-parting with me even for a minute, she's so narvous."

"But if anything should occur during my absence?"

"Oh, there ain't no fear of that; besides, sir, if anything occurred, I'd ring loudly, and you'd know you was wanted."

"Do give me something; my lips are so parched I can scarcely speak," murmured the sufferer.

"I go, dear lady; I'll be back in five minutes. Nurse, don't let your mistress have anything while I'm absent;" and with this observation the doctor left the chamber.

Presently the patient sighed loudly.

"All's right; I thought it was so," mentally ejaculated Mrs. Rearden, as she first rushed to lock the door of the room,

and then flew to the bedside of the lovely young countess.

What then passed it is not our province to describe; but in two or three minutes more the monthly nurse hurried from that bedside, bearing in her arms a male infant. The little creature gave a single scream, which was at once deadened by a flannel wrapper thrown over its mouth by the nurse, who quickly carried her burden to an adjoining room, which overlooked the garden, and, taking a light in her hand, she waved it to and fro before the window.

In less than a minute a human head appeared. Mrs. Rearden threw open the sash, and handed the new-born babe to a man, who stood on a short ladder outside. In return, she received from him a carefully-enveloped object, and, as quick as thought, shut the window

down, and hastily returned to the luxurious chamber of Lady Grantchester; here she seized a foot-bath, and instantly filling it with boiling water from a kettle on the fire, plunged into it the corpse of a recently born child, then violently pulling the bell, and unbolting the door, she began to sob and cry, without noticing the anxious, though low-toned, inquiries of the newly-made mother. In another moment the doctor rushed in.

“What’s the matter? what’s the matter?”

“Oh! doctor, it’s all over. My lady has been safely brought to bed of——”

“Of what?” eagerly demanded the medical man.

“A still-born baby! a male child.”

A harrowing scream from the bed reminded the speakers of their want of caution.

"I put it into a warm bath, hoping it might revive. But, alas! I don't see no signs."

The piteous sobs and sighs of Lady Grantchester were really heart-rending; even to an accoucheur and a monthly nurse they were painful; and while the doctor murmured his deep sympathy, Mrs. Rearden kept up a chorus of "Poor lady! who'd a-thought it?"

The dead body was raised from the vessel of hot water, and the doctor, after a moment's examination, pronounced it "dead—born dead."

At that moment, a noise was heard; they turned round, and, to their horror and surprise, beheld the wretched mother standing near them. She had sprung from her bed, and now in phrenzied accents screamed out,

"'Tis false! 'tis false! I heard it cry."

"Not so—not so," soothingly replied

the obsequious son of Æsculapius ; “the poor little creature never breathed. I will stake my professional reputation that those lungs were never inflated by natural breath. Do believe me, dear lady. Alas ! I wish it were otherwise !”

“I heard it cry. I swear I did.”

“Doctor, my lady raves. As I’m an honest woman, that ’ere child was born as you see it.”

“I know it was. To science the fact is clear ; had it ever breathed even a single respiration, I should have known it, and thrown a heavy responsibility on you.”

“You’re perfectly right, sir. Oh, my lady, don’t take on so ; the doctor can see it never had no breath ; indeed it never had.” And she mentally added, “It’s lucky I didn’t do as *he* told me. If I had, I’d have been found out ; now

all's right here, and t'other shall pay me for the fright I've had."

"Do return to your bed," urged the medical man; "your ladyship will endanger your life by this exertion."

"And what is my life now? I tell you they have murdered my angel child."

Just then the Earl of Grantchester, one of the most amiable of men and devoted of husbands, quietly entered the room—from which he had been persuaded to absent himself only during a single hour, to attend to his duties in the House of Lords; and as he now came in, the last observation of his beloved wife, her excitement, and the manner of all, struck him with such strange astonishment, that, overcome by emotion and terror, he had hardly strength to inquire the cause of the scene around him.

"Alas! my lord," interposed the doc-

tor, "here is the body. I am sorry to say that, from certain indications, the poor little infant never could have breathed. Look, my lord."

"I say it again, the child has been murdered!"

"Do, do be calm, dear Agnes. Remember that, if it be *His* will, we must not repine. My dear sir, your medical knowledge I have the highest respect for; but the blow has fallen so suddenly and heavily on me, and Lady Grantchester is so fearfully excited, that, to satisfy all parties—nay, I am sure the step will meet with your approbation—I shall call in three of the first accoucheurs in London to pronounce their opinion—not that I doubt yours—but my wife seems so positive. The loss of an heir to the House of Grantchester must be looked into."

"How lucky that I didn't stop the

breath of the real one!" murmured Mrs. Rearden to herself.

"My lord, I sincerely sympathize with your feelings, and highly approve of your suggestion; but just now we have something of more importance to attend to."

"What can be of more importance?"

The doctor approached the peer and whispered—"The countess has lost her reason. I trust it is only for a time; but at present she is——"

"Doctor, doctor—you kill me. My beloved Agnes!"

"Yes, Gerard, he is there in heaven. I see him beckoning—I'll come, my beautiful boy; yes, I'll come to you, and leave these foul murderers——"

"Alas! you see, my lord," groaned the doctor, pointing to his patient, "she is a lunatic."

"Yes, my lord, there arn't no doubt; no

doubt about it whatsoever," joined in Mrs. Rearden.

The Earl rushed towards his wife ; but, glaring at him, she accused him of plotting with the destroyers of her darling child.

" Yes, yes ; I know he is a seraph now. I heard his last cry—his cry doubtless for help—yet his inhuman father was not there to help him. Yes, my bright infant, your mother could not save you ; but she will join you in heaven." And the wretched demented one burst out in a wild song.

The Earl could bear no more. He threw himself into an arm-chair, and, covering his face with his hands, the hero of many a well-sustained fight burst into tears. The doctor took him by the arm, and with what he imagined words of comfort, led him gently from the place.

The callous nurse, who, soothing only for hire, cared little for the grief she had

caused, now partly by force, partly by entreaty, again placed the poor lady in her bed, and then, ringing the bell, several persons were soon assembled, who formed a truly sorrowing group (for Agnes was beloved by all who served her) around her couch. The doctor returned and made arrangements that her ladyship should be strictly watched. The nurse glided from the room.

Standing near the door, she found George Sydney; the traces of tears were still plainly visible on his cheeks. The nurse silently opened the door of an adjoining chamber; he followed her in.

“Well, I’ve done it. It was a werry hard struggle.”

“Hush! hush! Come and speak to me at my own house, but not here; walls have ears.”

“Give me my money!” whispered Mrs. Rearden.

"Wait," answered George.

"Not a moment—my life is in danger !
I quit England to-morrow for ever ; give
me my money, or——"

"Well, well, here it is ;" and Sydney
took out a pocket-book, in which were
several bank-notes, counted out fifty pounds,
and handed them to Mrs. Rearden.

"Ten pounds more for my travelling
expenses, or I must remain in London."

"Cormorant ! will nothing satisfy you ?
But remember, this is your last ;" and he
handed her another ten.

"Well, now we are square for the
present."

"Present ? what do you mean ? I've
overpaid you."

"Yes, yes, I understand ; and now I'll
trouble you not to leave this room for
some minutes, for it wont do for us two
to be seen trotting about together : so
mind, don't stir ; do you hear me ?"

"This tone to me ! Do you forget our relative positions ?"

"Not at all. In public I'm a poor nurse, and you a fine, dashing young fellow, as will—thanks to me—be a grand lord one of these days ; but in private, you know, we're partners."

"Partners, woman ! Partners in what ?"

"In crime ! So mind your eye, Master George, and don't you ruffle my feathers. Behave well, and you wont hurt. Good night, and pleasant dreams to you," added she, as she left him.

"Curses on her ; would that I could destroy her !" muttered George.

The nurse was returning to the sick chamber, but was forbidden to re-enter it for the present, as her appearance evidently excited her ladyship.

"You're right, doctor ; I'll come back in the morning and see the dear creature.

Ah! she's a hangel of goodness when she's in her right senses; but she's sadly troubled just now. I've several little odd jobs to do at home; so I begs respectfully to take my leave. I'll call and take my wages and things in the morning, and I hopes to find her poor dear ladyship better. Poor thing! Rich and poor, we all suffers alike," sighed she, with a look upwards as she left the presence of the medical man and descended the handsome staircase of Grantchester House.

CHAPTER IV.

OLD ST. GILES'S.

“WELL, when you’ve done sipping your cat-lap stuff, I’ll trouble you to explain what all this here means. You knows I’m not to be hoodwinked or deceived, Mother Rearden—ever since we kept company you’ve been a trying that ’ere dodge on me, but it wont do—so now tell me the truth, the whole truth, or you may repent it.”

These words were uttered by a coarse-looking labourer—probably, from his appearance, a navvie—a good-looking rough man, whose age might be forty-five, but whose well-tanned skin and prematurely furrowed face might well defy a critical

guesser to pronounce the exact years he numbered. A pickaxe, a shovel, a spade and a hod, rested in the corner, and the visitor to this out-of-the-way region (for we paint the back room of a lodging-house in one of the four streets which still remain to tell where St. Giles's of the olden times existed, and of which Mrs. Rearden was the proprietor, and to which she was an occasional visitor, as at the present moment—her professional address being very far superior to this locality) might be tempted to believe that the man before him was simply an Irish labourer or a British navvie; but to confess the truth, which we are ever bound to supply to our readers, there did exist certain gentlemen who not unfrequently loll about the streets of London dressed in tight-blue uniforms, with letters and numbers on their collars, who privately refused to believe these to be the sole

employments of Jem Marks. It is true he had never got into any serious scrape but once; but he had often been suspected, and poor dear Mrs. Rearden (as her neighbours called her) was generally blamed for keeping company with such a scampy chap. Mrs. Rearden, however, scorned their opinions, and hung the remnant of her affections (no great weight) on the weak support of Jem Marks's manly beauty.

"Don't you think, my dear Jem, that if I asked you to go and fetch a bottle of Old Tom, and gave you a five-pound note out of the ten pounds which I received for this last job, it would be a deal better way than telling you a long story about how I earned it?"

"So *you* may think, but *I* doesn't; so you may as well out with it at once."

"But Jem, darling, it's a nasty affair ;

you're better clear of it. If I tells it, you becomes an accomplice, and I'd rather suffer myself than see *you* suffer."

"Gammon, Sal! soft sawder wont go down with me. Do you think as how I believes you only got ten pounds for stealing one babby and substituting, as Poll Marshall says, another for it?"

"I hopes you didn't tell Poll of it."

"Not too much. Of coorse I had to say something when I carried off her dead kid, and gave her a sovereign for it. But I didn't tell her uncommon much, for I'm blessed if I had anything to tell."

"So much the better ; now run and get the gin. Here's a bottle ; that 'ere tea has made me dreadful thirsty, I do declare." At that moment a child placed in the bed cried out. Mrs. Rearden flew across the room, and with alacrity began feeding it.

"What the dickens are you after? Why don't you finish the brat?"

"Jem, Jem! you don't understand; that 'ere babby is a fortun to us as long as it lives, and I'll take care it shan't never die while I blows my bellows. It's a reg'lar income to us."

"No; is it, though? Well, then, Sal, I'll take care on it. We'll give it some gin when I comes back."

"No; it's a lord's child, and will turn up its nose at our common stuff. It's of a rare good family."

"And how, Mother Rearden, did you get into such good company?"

"I was strongly recommended there by the gent as is to support us for the future."

"What?" screamed the amazed Jem.

"I arn't joking. He somehow or other got acquainted with me, as you will have it, and then he seduced my principles, as he called 'em, and then he bribed me to throttle this little chap; and, to make it

easy for me, he introduced me to the Earl and the doctor, and swore that, though I *warn't* the most polished, yet I *was* the most clever nurse in all the world, and so I gets in; and then he thinks I was such a fool as to go for to do it, but I didn't; you got Poll's dead kid just in the nick of time—to antomize it, as you told her—and so I passed it off on the lord as his child, and I brought this here little fellow away."

"And what did you get for all this?"

"Ten pounds."

"No more?"

"No, upon my life, that was all! But you shall fairly have half; so now run and get the liquor;" and Mrs. Rearden went to her cloak, which she had hung up, and from its ample folds pulled out a pocket-book, from whence she took a ten-pound note. But this seemed scarcely to satisfy her; she still eagerly looked through the

different compartments, and, after satisfying herself that there was really no more in it, dropped it on the floor with a groan, and in agonizing tones ejaculated—"I'm a ruined woman! I'm undone. Oh, I'm lost—lost for ever!"

"What's the matter, Sal?" asked her companion, carelessly.

"Oh, it's gone, all gone. I'll go to the purlice in the morning. Oh, these London thieves, curse 'em!"

"Don't curse 'em, mother. What have you lost?"

"Fifty pounds in good notes," sobbed the woman.

"Why, you said you'd only ten."

"I know I did, but that was a lie. I had fifty pounds besides this ten."

"Then you meant to chizzle me?"

"Not by no means. I meant to surprise you first and then to divide it afterwards, fairly. You needn't smile;

indeed I did. 'Pon my life, Jem, I really did!"

"Ah, then there's no harm done," replied Jem. "Here's the cash, and now for once we'll halve it fairly, though I suspect you seldom does;" and he produced the money, which he had cunningly abstracted from Mrs. Rearden's cloak whilst she was engaged in feeding the baby.

Whether her happiness at thus recovering one-half of her lost treasure, or her anger at being thus robbed, predominated, it is impossible to know; suffice it to say that, after a moment's consideration, she smoothed (as far as was possible) her wrinkled forehead, and joined in the laugh which now burst from her rough wooer.

A few minutes more and the spirits sparkled on the table, harmony was restored, and confidence at its height.

"And now, Sal, tell us, old brick, what do you mean to do with the young 'un?"

"I shall put it out to wet-nurse with Poll—she's the werry one. As her child is dead it will be a comfort to her, and she'll do it for a couple of bob a week."

"And who's to pay her?"

"I will," proudly replied the monthly nurse—"I will; it'll only cost about five pound a year, and I can afford that much now."

"I loves you dearly, Mrs. Rearden, you be's so sharp; you allays makes something out of everything."

"And I means to do so. And now let's talk of something else."

"So we will, darling, if you likes."

"But, I say, you forgot to give me the change out of the sovereign I gave you for the gin."

"Lor'! so I did. But never mind that now; let's have a cosy chat, Sal—hang money, we've got plenty—let's enjoy ourselves. Fasten the door, light another

candle, and may I be smashed if we don't make a night of it! It's too late for you to return to Russell-street to-night, so let's make ourselves comfortable."

"So we will," replied Mrs. Rearden, forgetting to press for her change; "it's a poor heart that *never* rejoices."

We will pursue their orgie no further. We have seen quite enough of them.

CHAPTER V.

RESCUED.

WE will, for the better condensing of our narrative to a proper length, skip over ten years—years which individually have comprised a whole history, changed men's fortunes, witnessed the last rites of sepulture bestowed on thousands, embracing in its cycle the proud announcement of even many a royal birth; wars have raged, and the same hands who only yesterday sought to destroy each other have been since clasped in amity; whole nations have been swept away, and new kingdoms started into existence; the peer has become a beggar, and the beggar a peer. The heir of good fortune

may wonder at the rapid improvements of the world; the bereaved widow may grieve to see that the sun shines as brightly as when he whom she loved was wont to bask beneath its rays. Ten years have brought an age of change—of care and happiness to countless thousands. To London as a city, to her ways, her habits, and her fashions, the lapse has scarcely been perceptible; the wanderer returns, and finds his parents sitting down to almost the same identical meal, and precisely at the same hour as they indulged in it before he went away; he seeks a place of amusement—he sees the same faces he left; while the rector of the parish appears as if his sermon had been a continuous stream of eloquence, poured forth without interruption since the last sabbath before his departure. The traveller who thus finds all unchanged, turns away with disgust

on thus discovering himself practically to be but a single—a wretched iota, in the great world in which he lives, unnoticed and uncared for.

But far different from these are the feelings of the boy who has passed the two first lustres of his life, and embraces within that period the every recollection of the past. To him the ten years have been a life—an age, and all that has gone before it seems only as a well-invented narrative, a pleasing fiction. To him the future abounds with hope and joy; but all boys are not happy, for many a poor lad has had his bright young spirit crushed by tyranny and poverty, and those pure feelings intended by a beneficent Creator to lead a future man to heaven, diverted into channels of discontent and crime.

The boy who now slowly paced beside the Regent's Canal, within a few yards

of the Harrow-road bridge, was 'not, however, yet stained with crime. The only guilty thought which had ever assailed his young mind had just passed through it, and that thought had as instantly been chased away by a superior feeling of right—that feeling of right which from one's birth lurks within our bosom, and blooms without extraneous aid in the breast of every human being. He had scanned his situation—he had reflected on his ways; he foresaw the misery of his future lot. For a single instant, then, did the unhappy youth dream of an antidote which the spirit of evil whispered in his ear. How easily he might end all his woes by plunging into the sluggish stream before him! He took one pace forward, and, as he did so, he looked up towards heaven. The appeal was not in vain—an ever-watchful Providence at once obliterated

the vile suggestion, and gave him courage to bear up against misfortune. With a proud smile of triumph he threw back his bright tresses, and wiping the tears from his eyes, he showed a noble, handsome face, a countenance that no poverty could destroy, as he loudly exclaimed, as if in answer to the wicked spirit that had just prompted him, "No! God will help me if I'm good," and he calmly continued his walk.

In front of him walked a nurse, carrying a lovely child, some twelve months old, dressed with all the expensive luxury which wealth can bestow. The woman was humming a tune as she went along, bearing in her arms her sleeping charge; the poor lad would have given worlds to have entered into conversation with her (for he felt sadly lonely), but she appeared to be far too fine a lady for him to presume to address,

so he silently followed her along. Presently a loud shout was heard ; an infuriated bull suddenly appeared in the towing-path, pursued by several butchers and a host of boys all shouting as loud as they could, and thereby increasing the rage of the savage animal. The creature came roaring and tearing on ; in a moment the lad, with that instinct of self-preservation which is implanted in us all, was safely ensconced in a tree ; not so the poor girl, who, seeing immediate and imminent danger, jumped into the canal. The animal galloped on, and was soon past the spot ; only two or three of the mob remained behind, and endeavoured to drag the nurse out of the water. At length, though with difficulty, they did so, and re-ascended the bank, probably unaware that a poor little infant was still behind. By this time, the lad, who had watched the whole scene, was down, and



running to the edge of the water, eagerly called on the bystanders to assist him in rescuing the child—but all in vain; the water was ten feet deep, and none of them could swim. John (for such was the boy's name) did not hesitate for a moment; he threw off his jacket and plunged in; the baby had sunk, but he dived down, for he was a good swimmer, and after one or two failures, rose up with the little being in his arms. He handed it to a bystander before he left the water. On coming on land himself, however, he was overcome, and became insensible for a few minutes; but soon recovering, was hastening from the scene, evidently fearing his long absence from home might get him into trouble, when the nurse, who was profuse in her thanks, insisted on knowing his name and address. He gave them: they ran thus—"John Marks, Little-street, St. Giles's."

“What a horrid place!” uttered the nurse.

“I hope the child is none the worse, ma’am; good-bye!” cried the boy, as he scampered off as quickly as his legs could carry him.

And now again we turn to the scene of our last chapter; a comfortable dinner is on the table, and at it are seated Jem Marks and Mrs. Bearden, or, as they are now called—having lately gone through the ceremony of marriage—Mr. and Mrs. Marks, while a third place remains vacant as if for an expected guest.

“Drat that boy! says I; where can he be loitering? I only wish I had a hold of his ears.”

“I wish I had him by the scruff of the neck! I’d half break his idle young back.”

“Marks, you’re werry wiolent in talk.”

“Oh, it’s very fine for you; you thinks, ’cause you got into a grand lord’s house

by the back door, you may get in again ; but there ain't weazens to stretch, or babbies' breaths to stop, every day in the week."

"Hush ! don't be a fool."

"Call me a fool again, and I'll punch your head, Mother Marks, as you names yourself."

"No, you wont ; I holds the purse, and if I gives you a shilling, may I be ——"

"Stop, stop, mother, that'll do ; don't be wiolent ; it's all through this cussed boy ; I've a mind to turn him out neck and crop."

"That would be clever. Why, 'twas only last March we got twenty pounds."

"Yes, but then we keeps him, and by threatening this psalm-singing chap, we could get the money just as easily if he were away. Why, he still believes him to be dead ; I am sure I wishes he wur."

"Jem, you *is* an ass, and no mistake. We've lived so far by supposing to have killed him; by-and-by we'll play t'other game, and make our fortunes by restoring him."

"Well, that's clever; I'm blessed if it arn't. But who'd believe our word?"

"Never mind," said Mrs. Marks, oracularly shaking her head—"never mind. I can see through a milestone as well as most people. Besides, I likes the boy; they say he's the image of me."

A mouthful he was about to swallow went the wrong way and nearly choked Marks. He was smothering a laugh at the preposterous idea of the beautiful boy resembling the withered old hag before him; when, fortunately for him, the subject of their conversation entered, and endeavoured to steal quietly to his seat.

"Where have you been, you imp of the devil?" roared Marks.

Mrs. Marks started up and seized him.

"Why, your clothes are all wet and in a muck. I've a mind to give you a good hiding, you little warmint. Where have you been, eh?"

"In the canal."

"In the canal! What brought you there?" asked the female.

"I wish you'd never comed out of it," growled Jim.

"Please, I jumped in to save a baby."

"Did you succeed?"

"Yes."

"Did they give you anything?" eagerly demanded Mrs. Marks; "if they did, give it me—it belongs to me."

"But they gave me nothing."

"Then you're an idle, good-for-nothing young blackguard, to go and jump in the water and spoil all your clothes for nothing. And now tell me the truth."

"I always do," sobbed the boy.

“What brought you up there?”

“Please, mother, Mr. Figgins turned me out of school.”

“Out of school! what for?”

“Because you never paid him, and he said ’twas setting a bad example. He gave me a severe caning, and took away my slate and books, to show the other boys what it was not to pay. He called you both by bad names.”

“Hang him! I’ll be quits,” muttered Marks.

“And so, sir, you chooses to behave bad, and gets turned out of your school and punished afore all the boys?”

“It was not my fault, mother.”

“Don’t answer me, you imperent fellow!”

“You keep our dinner waiting. But I’ll punish you; you shan’t have none to-day, and to-morrow your father——”

“He ain’t no cub of mine.”

“Silence, Jem. To-morrow your father will get you a box and a set of brushes, and will expect you to support yourself and bring us the profits. This here schooling’s all bosh ; we ain’t a-going to keep you in idleness, I can tell you.”

The boy sought his bed in tears, throwing out his clothes to be dried. The worthy couple resumed their meal.

Ere they had finished it, the clatter of a carriage and horses was heard in the narrow street ; unwashed heads were protruded from every window ; every doorway was filled with a curious crowd of admiring observers. And no wonder ; it was the first time such an equipage had been seen in this locality. Yes ; a splendid chariot, emblazoned with a nobleman’s arms, drawn by two spirited horses, who seemed to bear with impatience the control of the magnificently-liveried coachman, actually rolled down Little-street,

St. Giles's, while two gold-bedecked and powdered footmen condescended to inquire the address of Mr. Marks from door to door. Jem, who had heard this, turned pale, slammed to the door, and screamed out—"Sal, find me a hiding-place! I'm blowed if it's not the Lord Mayor come to take me up about that little affair in the City; hadn't I better get up the chimney?"

"No, you can't; don't you see there's a fire? Get under John's bed. I'll send 'em on a wrong scent; they shan't gammon me—there now, do be quick. Try to catch my Jem, indeed, it's like their imperdence. Now let 'em come if they dare;" and she flung open the door just as one of the powdered lacqueys had begun to strike on it with his gold-headed cane.

"What do you want?"

"Does Mr. Marks live here?"

"What's that to you? Suppose he

does, what then? but then agin, supposing he doesn't?"

"His lordship desired me to ask."

"I knows; I've seen the beak, but he shan't have my Jem. He's gone into the country; so the Lord Mayor may go ahead, and not come looking arter poor people; he'd better be a-taking care of the City."

"I really don't understand you," remonstrated the man.

"Let me out; there is some mistake, Thomas," mildly observed the occupant of the carriage—"let me out. My good woman," he added, approaching the ex-nurse, "if you are the wife of Mr. Marks, you can tell me if he has a son, a remarkably fine, daring boy."

"He hasn't no children," indignantly replied Mrs. Marks.

"Then I am in error; I regret it much, and will withdraw. I had hoped that one

so good would not have given a fictitious name and address. He evidently wished to avoid my thanks, and the reward his bravery had so justly merited."

"Reward?"

"Yes, madam. I am Lord Urmstone; my only daughter was nearly meeting with a watery grave, from which she was saved with difficulty by the courage of the fine lad I now so earnestly seek. Can you assist me in my search?"

Mrs. Marks nearly fainted with delight. Here was good fortune with a vengeance, but how was she to get at it? She now clearly saw that the little hero was the child she had just punished and disowned. She was, however, relieved from her perplexity by a strange stroke of luck. While his lordship's back was turned, Jem had crept from under the bed, fearful lest his wife should monopolize the treasure, and stood beside the nobleman.

"I'm Jem Marks, your lordship."

"Indeed! that's fortunate—you can then tell me; have you a boy of about ten or eleven years old?"

"Indeed I have, my lord."

"Is he at home?"

"Yes, my lord."

"I would like to see him, then," added the peer, sitting down.

"Of course you shall." And in less than three minutes the fellow re-appeared, dragging in the poor child.

"My darling boy," whined Mrs. Marks, "I trusts you ain't caught cold from your wetting."

"I put the little chap to bed to prewent him having one," said Marks, trying to speak softly.

The peer embraced the boy; and, turning up his long locks, gazed on him with evident admiration. Then again he kissed his forehead, and turning to the wonder-struck couple, he said—

"You will allow me to take your son with me?"

"Of coorse, my lord."

"He ain't exactly our child, you see," chimed in Sally; "he's a hoffspring of a poor relative as is dead, so we've adopted him, and treats him exactly as if he was a babby of our own; don't we, Johnny?" And as he did not answer, she gave him a sly pinch which made him wince with pain.

Whether Lord Urmstone saw this or not I cannot say; he made no remark, but hurried the little fellow into his carriage, and in a few seconds the proud horses and the still prouder menials shook from their feet the squalid dust of this most disgusting neighbourhood.

Delighted at the idea of the reward they anticipated, the joy-loving pair got an extra pint of their favourite beverage; and by drinking to each other, to the boy

who was to make their fortune, and to the peer who was to reward *them* for *his* conduct, they got so confused that they with difficulty made out the contents of the following note, which reached them late in the evening:—

“MR. MARKS,

“As the boy I took from your house to-day is not your own child, you can care little for him—indeed, he does not speak highly of your affection. In your line of life, the burden of maintaining and causing to be educated the child of another must press heavily on you; I therefore take charge of the lad, and relieve you from all further responsibility. His bringing up will now devolve on me. He shall be trained properly, but only with notions fitting his own sphere. This will amuse me, and perhaps solace me for many other cares that weigh me down.”

"But, I say," chimed in Mrs. Marks, "ain't there no money? I'm blessed if he shall have him for nothing."

"Don't be a fool—don't it take all the expense off our hands?"

"He's a stingy old rascal."

"That he be. But let's finish the letter—there's more on it, though there bean't no enclosure."

"To com-pen-sate ('what a plaguy long word!') for the loss of his services, I have ordered my secretary to call and give you a cheque for twenty-five pounds; and this sum I will forward you every year, as long as he remains with me. But if you attempt to come near him, or communicate with him without my express permission, that allowance will be instantly stopped.

"URMSTONE."

"Hurrah!" shouted Marks; "keep him

and welcome. I'll be whipped if I want the brat."

"Well, somehow or other, wirtue allays reaps its own reward. I brought up that boy well—didn't I send him to school for a bob a week?"

"Yes, but you never paid it."

"Well, that's no odds. But here's the Earl's jolly^o good 'ealth—'andsome is, as 'andsome does.' Suppose we have another quartern or so; we has lots of the tin. 'Pon my life, that boy's inwaluable. I feels so sleepy, Mark;" and down dropped her head beside that of her husband, in hopeless intoxication.

CHAPTER VI.

THE SPONGING-HOUSE.

THE law for capturing and imprisoning the unhappy debtor is now, fortunately, modified. The poor fellow using his every exertion to gain sufficient money to pay off his debts, can no longer be pounced upon and hurried off to a jail, where years of compelled idleness — years during which the distracted brain weakens in its powers by feeding on itself within stone walls, and loses its brightest intellect before his liberty is restored. Cut off from his family and friends by personal hatred, or carried off for political reasons, the wretched man who was in those days unable to satisfy

his creditors, was at once shut up in a prison, but not until he had been fleeced of his last shilling by some extortionate Israelite, in his filthy domicile of profligacy, where the son of the captor often played the part of a money-lender on interest (now unheard of), while his brother drew up the necessary papers, and presented a bill of charges frightful to behold. A cousin or a hanger-on haply may chance to be a wine-merchant; and as a large portion of the loan is represented by this luxury, he not only furnishes it, but afterwards repurchases it (sometimes within an hour), at a fearful loss. In these sponging-houses, everything is paid for with ready money. No bill is made out, for even the thievish proprietor would himself have blushed at seeing his monstrous charges recorded on paper.

Yes, such *was* the law—now much im-

proved, though still open to beneficial changes.

But to return to our narrative, and to those laws as they are now carried out.

In the back parlour of a wretched street, not a hundred yards from Chancery-lane, sat a debtor. His face, screened from observation by his hands, his desponding attitude, the occasional beat of his foot, all bespoke the grief of the man who (as we said before) now sat in Mr. Ephraim's well-barred room.

There is no cushion on the greasy chair, the oaken table is bedaubed with ink and disfigured with letters cut in it, the uncarpeted floor is slightly sanded, the walls are ungraced by pictures. A coarse repast stands untouched in a corner, while in its place stands a bottle of sherry and an ill-wiped glass; everywhere dirt and carelessness greet the eye.

No wonder, then, that the elegant man before us groans in spirit, at being thus detained within this pandemonium.

And now he turns round and displays the handsome face of George Sydney. He does so as a snuffling Jew boy announces that Abraham Smith wishes to speak to him.

"Show him in," quickly said George, "and light a fire—I feel cold—and bring me a bottle of port—old port, if you have it."

"The best?"

"Of course—why do you linger?"

"Cash down—no tick here—debtors allays pay beforehand."

George threw down half a sovereign in disgust.

"Well, I don't think that's enough. Mr. Ephraim allays charges eighteen shillings for his best port."

"Well, then — there—will that do?"

cried the man of refinement, throwing down another; "take what you like, but leave me."

Abraham Smith entered, and at once seated himself; the obsequious Israelite had evidently a short memory, for he forgot all signs of his former respect, and even omitted to take off his hat.

"Vell, you've sent for me—vat have you got to say? Going to pay, eh?"

"You know I can't. Heaven knows I would, if I could."

"I say, the less you says about that 'ere place the better; swindlers don't go there."

"Swindlers! Do you presume——"

"Lor' blesh my shoul—a storm in a butter-boat. Don't trouble yourself to get into a passion for this here trifle; you'll hear a deal more before I've done with you. Don't you call it a swindle to dress up your walley as a clergyman,

and tell me he was the Reverend Mr. Coleman, a Christian parson, with a large fortune, and so induce me to cash your jint bill? Didn't you tell me the Hearl would do hanything for you, and now I 'ears he wont have nothing to say to you; and didn't you 'umbug me about being made a lay bishop; and wasn't you all the time a trying to get into Parliament to shirk being arrested? Rather rummy for an 'onest man. I don't suppose forgery would come much amiss to such a chap as you."

"Forgery, you villain!"

"Oh, call names; they don't break no bones. Mind, I don't say as how you 'ave committed forgery, 'cause that's hactionable; but I says, and I believes it too, you wouldn't a-mind doing it."

"Let us drop this," hastily said George; "I sent for you to ask you if there was no way of arranging this business?"

"None, unless you can pay."

"You know I can't."

"I know you are a swindling scamp, and I'll see if I can't prosecute you and your pal for conspiracy; robbing an 'onest man out of his good money."

"You only gave me sixty pounds and some wretched wine, which I gave you back, for a three-months' bill of three hundred pounds."

"Vell, and too much, too; ain't I lost the sixty pounds?"

"You may very well wait till the death of Lord Grantchester; he's in a deep decline."

"That's a lie."

George, irritated beyond endurance, bit his lip till the blood came.

"Besides, *I* don't care for Lord Grantchester, not I; I believe he's a bad 'un too; tame ducks don't come from wild ducks' nests."

The Jew boy came in, put the port on the table, and handed George a note. The worthy Abraham filled two glasses of the old port just brought in, and gulped down one after the other. Having read the note, George appeared to feel triumphantly joyful, and murmured, "It is from my brother."

"Hang your brother ! I don't care for him, not I. Besides, I don't believe it."

"Is my lord's servant to wait?" asked the boy.

"No," replied George. The boy withdrew.

The creditor began to get fidgety ; his eyes grew wide open ; he took off his hat, as if by accident, and said, in a less bullying tone—

"If I could only believe that letter's from the Hearl."

"Read it," cried George, carelessly throwing it across to him.

He did so ; it ran thus :—

“ MY DEAR GEORGE,—

“I have just heard of your strange misfortune. In half an hour I will be with you ; my only and attached brother must not remain in durance a moment longer than is necessary. I only wait for the arrival of my lawyer, when I will come, my dearest George, and restore you to liberty. I trust this *contretemps* may not transpire, as it might injure you with some of your friends ; although, as you say, it must ever redound to your credit, as the money was raised to save the family of a poor clergyman from ruin. You were ever kind-hearted and generous ; but, alas ! I fear you are sometimes, as in the present instance, sadly victimized. Expect me in half an hour.

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ GRANTCHESTER.”

The reading of the letter concluded, neither spoke a word for a moment or two; at length George broke silence, and, in a somewhat exulting voice, asked—

“Well, what do you think of that, Mr. Smith?”

“Werry, werry satisfactory, Mr. Sydney; the Hearl’s a trump; and now I’m really glad, though it went to my heart at the time to do so, that I arrested you; for, you see, it’s brought your noble relatives forward. So, if you’ll allow me, we’ll drink to the ’ealth of his lordship;” and he gulped down a bumper.

“Well, it’s lucky there’s no detainers.”

“None; I had the hoffice searched, and ’ad there been any, I would ’ave paid ’em, and so made one transaction of it.”

“*You* pay them! why, you were just pressing me for your money.”

“Vell, I vas a little irritated, ’cause a worthless young chap had done me out

of a large sum this morning, and so I spoke warmly. But, Lor' love ye, I never meant nothing; so far from it, if you want any more money you shall have it."

"Then if I want any?"

"Vell, my good sir, I'd do anything in life to help you, but I shan't have no funds till to-morrow, and then you can have a hundred or two, if you likes."

"I suppose, then, I may leave this at once?"

"Vell, not exactly; it's not reg'lar, and I likes to do all these matters reg'lar; besides, if you was once let out, the Hearl wouldn't pay for you, and so you'd better stay here for both our sakes. You may as well tell his lordship that the debt's a *little* more; because, you see, there are some hexpenses, and I 'opes you wont forget that I've treated you like a gentleman, and 'ad you brought 'ere in a cab."

"For which I paid."

Abraham Smith was deaf to this observation.

"And now, as my lord is a-coming, I'll cut, and perhaps you'll get the amount, some three hundred and fifty pounds."

"Not so; three hundred pounds exactly, for which you gave me sixty pounds."

"Vell, vell, perhaps it is only three hundred pounds; but then I told you just now, there's the hexpenses. Good-bye, Mr. Sydney; if I can be of any service, let me know." And the fellow bowed himself out, inwardly scorning and detesting the victim he had made.

The money-lender had scarcely left the house when Lord Grantchester arrived. Though ten years had passed since his double bereavement, yet he was still the man of noble bearing that had so widely

won the love of the opposite sex ; but his hair had now become white, and his fine countenance bore evident marks of deep and lasting sorrow.

I will not attempt to paint the scene which followed: the candid, heartfelt outpourings of the grieved nobleman ; his deep annoyance at thus seeing his dear brother incarcerated ; nor will we depict the hypocritical assurances, the false tales, the pious appeals, of George Sydney. It is enough to tell, that the younger brother obtained six hundred pounds from the peer to pay off the debt, promising to follow him in an hour, and that within that period he again saw Mr. Abraham Smith, and compromised the debt for one hundred and fifty pounds ; having been compelled, in order to do so, to vow most solemnly that it was all he had been able to obtain from the Earl. Smith was deceived by the affected annoyance

of the splendid Tartuffe, and eagerly grasped the ready money.

Abraham rejoiced in his triumph.

George Sydney conquered the Jew, and, with four hundred and fifty pounds in his pocket, strode off to Grantchester House.

CHAPTER VII.

THE CONSULTATION.

IN the almost regal dining-room of Grantchester House sat three individuals around a magnificent grate, whose marble decorations bespoke the hand of an Italian master, while the low stove itself displayed that enlivening blaze which is only known in England. The magnificent dining-table, whose polished surface reflected the fine cut crystal, was pushed back, and everything bespoke the fact that—the meal over—the party now sat in serious consultation.

The Earl reclined back in gloomy silence—his quivering lip bespoke the deep anxiety he felt in the issue of the

conversation which was about to take place. On either side of him his brother, the Honourable George Sydney, and a medical man, whom he had brought with him. The former seemed almost moved to tears, and frequently cast up his eyes to Heaven, as if appealing for aid in the coming council; the latter seemed to quit with regret the delicious wine he had been sipping.

Yes; such was the party assembled at Lord Grantchester's the night after the strange occurrences we have just described.

"Alas! my lord," sighed our friend the doctor, "you must not indulge in a hope; I fear there is no chance of her ladyship's recovering her reason."

The Earl, however, seemed determined to hope against hope, and firmly remonstrated—

"I never saw Lady Grantchester looking better."

"In body, I admit; but in mind——"

"Did she not speak reasonably? did she not answer coherently?"

"That is true, my dear brother," chimed in Sydney; "but alas!——"

"Yes; her ladyship is not afflicted by what may be styled lunacy, but rather a fearful monomania; she believes that her offspring was murdered."

"I am aware of it; I heard it all from behind the screen you placed before me; but this was the only subject on which she was irrational."

"So much the worse," sighed the doctor, shaking his head.

"I really consider that both you and George drew her out unfairly on this subject."

"Not I, dear brother!"

"We did so purposely," hastily said the other. "We wished to test her ladyship's sanity."

“On all else she was sane?”

“Not at all. That she appeared so, I admit; but since she still indulged in this sad delusion, she could not have been really sane on any subject. No; the one lurking madness may to-morrow extend itself to others, and in an instant, from the most perfect seeming good sense, she may turn to some fresh hallucination. As murder is now uppermost in her thought, she might indulge in suicidal propensities, or suddenly endeavour to destroy those whom, in her better health, she most fondly loved.”

“Indeed, doctor,” loudly exclaimed George, “my brother must be protected from such a possible danger. His kind and affectionate heart must not thus overcome his better reason.”

“I wish I was dead!” lowly murmured the Earl.

“Heaven forbid!” quickly rejoined

George. "Remember, you have other ties to live for."

"None."

"Have you not a brother—a fond, doating brother, whose every pride and wish is centered in you?"

"Right, right, George! I was ungrateful, selfish; but the agony of this blow is hard to bear. Doctor, one last question—Is it not possible that Agnes may recover?"

"It is possible. But——"

"Then," cried the peer, starting up, "to Heaven I leave the result. Before the Throne of Grace I will plead my cause, and *He* who never turned away from the mourner's prayers will hear me. Yes, yes, I feel it—she *will* recover, and till then I'll bear my fate with patience."

"Grantchester, you speak like a man and a Christian. But now let us change the subject. Doctor, you recommended

my brother to try a change of air ; to-morrow I have agreed to accompany him to his estates in the south of Ireland."

"He could not do better."

"Besides, it will divert the current of his thoughts. He has lately received several complaints against his land steward and his agent. These may be true or false ; but he is anxious to inquire personally into them."

"It is my duty, George, to do so."

"If his health does not then improve decidedly, we will try the Continent."

"It is of no use—mine is no malady of the organs : it is misery that is wearing out my frame."

"Come, come, rouse yourself. Let us have some of the old Romany. Burgundy is better suited to this cold climate than claret."

The wine was called for and drank. The Earl handed a cheque of considerable

amount to the obsequious medical man, who promised to take charge of Lady Grantchester and frequently to visit her in the splendid mansion, which mocked, by its gaudy display, the misery of its unhappy inmates. George drove back with him to town, and, desiring Coleman to be ready to start with him by the next evening's mail train for Ireland, retired to sleep.

The guilty often sleep soundly ; not so the pure-minded but afflicted man. The Earl of Grantchester, without a single fault, passed that night in wakeful watchfulness.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE VILLA.

MINGLED among the small villas which grace the banks of the Regent's Canal, as it flows through St. John's Wood—facetiously styled by the leading newspaper, the “Forest of the Evangelist”—at whose doors the smartest broughams in London draw up, and whence many of the finest anonymæ in the metropolis gaily issue forth—amidst these pleasing cottages, distinguished by their gay curtains and their single birdcage, may be found some of the finest and very best suburban residences which imagination can picture or wealth produce. It was at the carriage-gate of such a mansion

that George Sydney rang on the morning of his intended trip to Ireland, and with that easy tone which denotes an habitual visitor, demanded from the gatekeeper whether her ladyship was at home—a question which, having been replied to in the affirmative, the honourable gentleman strolled on, and entered the hall-door without knocking.

In a bay-windowed saloon, a still beautiful woman reclined, playing with a miniature Blenheim spaniel, whom we may readily believe to have been more than ordinarily pampered, since it now sulkily refused to accept of a small chicken-bone which the fair ruin before us vainly endeavoured to conciliate him with. Shall we dare to tell the truth? shall we not be suspected of exaggeration when we account for the ill-temper of Fidelio, the canine *gourmet* before us, by stating that his dogship felt hurt in

being thus offered cold poultry, instead of the warm sweetbread that formed his usual meal? His fondly-attached mistress seemed rather to prize him for his aristocratic taste than to blame him for his daintiness, for she coaxed him and soothingly apologized for the remissness of her cook; and yet this elegant creature, the woman of unfading beauty, had a husband and a child, to whom she—strictly speaking—owed the love that she lavished on the long-eared brute. Separated by her own misconduct from the partner of her bosom and her now lovely daughter, Lady Urmstone almost shed tears at the ill-temper of her dog. To this unhappy state of mind had the once widely-admired Julia Windham come at last.

Without any preannouncement, George Sydney entered. A blush—a look of pleasure, lit up the fair one's counte-

nance, as, throwing off the lately-petted spaniel, she now rushed to meet her visitor, and in that reproachful tone, so flattering to the ear of man, she said, as she stretched forth her well-shaped hand—

“Come at last! I thought you were never coming; I trust, now you are here, you will stay.”

“Not so, Julia; I cannot—dare not.”

“How, dearest George? you alarm me.”

“Never mind; don’t trouble me for explanations; you will know all soon enough.”

“Has anything happened?”

“Yes—no—nothing particular; but I must be off to Ireland by to-night’s mail.”

“Some love affair?”

“Don’t be silly; you know well—you ought to know you are the only woman I ever cared for.”

"I wish I could think so," replied the lady, with a sigh; "but alas! you said so only a few hours before you proposed for Mary Davenport."

"Don't worry me, Julia; don't eternally harp on the same string; you well know I never loved her; you are aware that, at the moment, I was in pecuniary difficulties, and that the girl—for whom I did not care one rush—had half a county for a fortune; it would have benefited us both."

"George, George, you well know I care not for money; besides, I have already more than I can spend. Lord Urmstone has refused to touch one shilling of my property; I have all I desire save your love, and sometimes I strongly doubt that."

"Julia, I have only a few minutes; I have no time for boyish dalliance; I came to ask you a favour."

“Has not the world seen how I have sacrificed all for you?”

“That has nothing to do with the question; the world knows you are separated from your silly, good-natured husband; who, by-the-by, has picked up some beggar’s brat and put him in the army; the world believes your separation arises from difference of tempers; Urmstone himself *almost* believes it. None on earth suspect our *liaison*, and you are a fool indeed to yourself and a traitress to me, if ever you reveal it. Thank Heaven, my character is beyond suspicion.”

“George, do I deserve this doubt?” and her ladyship’s eyes filled with tears.

“Do, do, stop this useless exhibition—there is no one here to admire it; I neither believe in women’s tears nor sympathise with them.”

“George, you cut me to the soul.”

“Very likely; but, as I said before, I came to ask a favour; will you accord it?”

“Decidedly, if within my power.”

“Oh, that it certainly is, for only this moment you said you had a surplus of wealth. I want a thousand pounds.”

“What for?”

“Am I bound to degrade myself by explaining?”

“Not so, dear George; but I asked you to see how it could be managed. I really have not got it.”

“I don’t believe it, Julia.”

“Shall I swear by all——”

“Pooh! you know how lightly I hold oaths. You are trifling with me; you allow me to be ruined through your parsimony, and then expect me to believe your oaths; when, with such little wooing, you broke those you solemnly plighted at the altar.”

"This to me—to me?" almost screamed Lady Urmstone, throwing herself into an arm-chair, and, covering her face with her hands, sobbing loudly, while George, kicking aside the petted Fidelio, who snapped at him, coolly stirred the fire. "Yes, sir," added she, rising, and by a violent effort subduing her sorrow—"yes, sir, I speak the truth: I am overdrawn at my banker's; my steward will only remit to me next month. Remember, sir, the last five hundred I drew was for the arch-hypocrite George Sydney, whose conduct the world shall know."

Sydney felt alarmed; he had good sense enough to be aware that an infuriated tigress is a tame animal compared to an enraged woman.

"Julia, dear Julia, my temper is somewhat ruffled, I acknowledge. I start for Ireland to-night, or rather, I ought to do so; the probability is that I shall be arrested before I can leave town. Tell

me, Julia dear, could you not borrow it from Sir William Truften? He could refuse you nothing you asked him."

"Are you aware of the infamous proposals he made to me? would not this be encouraging them?"

"Perhaps it might appear so; I admit it might; but, Julia dearest, in this world we must sometimes temporize; nothing can be wrong which promotes a good result."

Lady Urmstone had up to this moment cleverly concealed her feelings, but this last proposition was too much for her to bear tamely; she drew herself up to her full height, and with that dignity for which she had been so famed a few years before, addressed her unfeeling—her dishonourable seducer—

"Leave the house, George Sydney! leave the house, ere the roof falls in and crushes you!"

"Pooh!" muttered George, "I am

happy to see that Mrs. Siddons has left so talented a successor."

"Sneer at me, insult me as much as you like, I deserve it for thus giving up all to trust in one who wears the complete garb of piety."

"Only the cloak, Julia."

"Interrupt me as you will, I care not. What is past cannot be undone. Oh! how I wish it could!" and, clasping her hands, the wretched woman fell upon her knees.

"Julia, do you know that at this instant you look exactly like Guido's celebrated Magdalene?"

Nature could bear no more.

The goaded woman started up and flew to the bell, which she pulled violently. "And who made me so? who caused my fall, and lost me the chance of a future heaven? Villain, it was you! Leave the room! leave the house! and

never dare to approach me again!" cried the broken-hearted but infuriated lady, as she threw herself on the nearest couch.

The servant entered.

"I wish your ladyship good morning; I trust you will shortly be better," said George, as he took up his hat, and, after desiring the footman to send her maid to Lady Urmstone, left the house.

As he walked round the corner, he muttered to himself, "It was time to cut. For her own sake, she'll be silent; a penniless heroine is far too romantic for me. I believe, after all, I had better stick close to Grantchester." And with these words Sydney jumped into his brougham, which awaited him, and drove down to take leave of the most austere Bishop in the House of Lords.

CHAPTER IX.

THE VICTORIA CROSS.

THOUGH Lord Urmstone had long since given up his active share in the world of politics, yet, having once felt deep interest in them, he still dwelt with pleasure on the passing events of the day, and never omitted to retire to his library immediately after breakfast to study the columns of that journal which, for the modest sum of one groat per diem, forms the opinion, guides the views, and rules the consciences of at least ten thousand well-educated readers, who, without the promptings of the all-powerful *Times* newspaper, would be compelled to think for themselves—an ingrate task to more

than one-half the number. To the peer before us, the popular journal was otherwise valuable. The doings of his compeers, the movements of the gay world, the foreign news—all bore their charms. Rapt in its varied narratives of opinions, his lordship frequently sat for hours together enjoying the record of those passing events in which he now played the part of a passive spectator.

In such a mood was he seated, when the door suddenly opened and a lovely young girl, sparkling in all the bright charms of youth, imbued with the unequalled grace which seems the peculiar attribute of our female aristocracy, came bounding into the room.

The peer looked up, and would probably have felt annoyed at this untimely intrusion, but when he beheld before him his lovely child, her countenance radiant with unusual joy, her bright

locks thrown back, her blue eyes sparkling with emotion, every other feeling was at once absorbed in proud affection, and he tenderly inquired the cause of her unexpected though welcome visit.

“Oh, papa, papa! I’m so happy,” cried Emily. “My birth-day has indeed been ushered in with joyful news.”

“How so, my love?”

“I am sixteen to-day, and I have just received——”

“I know—the set of pearls I ordered to be sent you. They have arrived earlier than I expected.”

“Not so, papa—better than that—better than all the pearls and diamonds in the world!”

“What is it?”

“Guess.”

“I really cannot, my dearest Emily. There’s little beyond your welfare that

can give me pleasure," said Lord Urmstone, with a sigh.

"Fie, papa, you forget—look here!" and she held up a letter. "It is from China; look at the post-mark."

"Indeed!" cried her father, taking it and scanning the superscription. "But, alas! it is not from John, by the handwriting. I hope nothing has befallen him;" and the old noble tore open the letter with trembling hands. Had he watched his child, he would have seen the colour fade from her cheeks, and her whole frame tremble with emotion.

"Thanks to Providence, all is right; it is from my old friend, Colonel Doveton, who writes about John. I am, however, so agitated—so startled by the sudden news, that I am unable to read the letter. May I then ask you, my darling child, to do so for me?"

"With pleasure, papa; though, to

confess the truth, I am rather flurried myself." She took the communication, and, after scanning it for a few seconds, read aloud:—

"MY DEAR LORD,

"I am truly happy to be able to give you a good account of your protégé, Ensign Marks, who arrived here soon after the corps had disembarked, and handed to me your lordship's letter of strong recommendation. It scarcely needed this to secure to him my favour, for, putting aside the great pleasure I had in attending to your lordship's wishes, the steady bravery and invariable good conduct of this young subaltern would surely have won my approbation and friendship. His strict attention to his military duties, his endurance during several severe trials, his kindness to those around him, have endeared him to us all,

and make me deeply regret his inability to write personally to you; while, on the other hand, it gives me sincere delight to record, as his immediate commanding officer, the bold feat of daring which has advanced him in no common degree along the envied path of glory."

The peer felt a tear of joy trickle down his cheek.

Emily paused as she lowly uttered—"Oh, papa, I fear that he may be hurt."

"Go on, love, we shall soon know all."

She resumed :—

"I think the best way of conveying to your lordship an exact sketch of the scene in which our young friend has played the part of a hero, will be by quoting from the official account of it, which I had the honour to transmit to the Governor-General in India, and to the Commander-in-Chief at home."

“Oh, think of Johnny being called a hero!” cried Emily, in ecstasy.

“Read on,” cried the equally pleased old nobleman.

“An hour before day-break on the morning of the 9th, the force under my command left Ching Loo and advanced in three columns towards the Peeko fortress, garrisoned by the rebel troops, said to exceed in number 6000 men, well armed and trained. The force under my command did not exceed 1500 men, and, as our artillery were not yet come up, the attempt might seem rash. I had, however, learnt from authority I could rely on, that reinforcements were hourly expected by the enemy; I therefore trust your Excellency will not blame me for thus hazarding an attack. After two hours’ painful march we at length came in sight of the fortress, which was even

more strongly fortified than I had expected. The walls, which were formed of solid clay, were about twenty feet high, at the foot of which was a deep fosse some twelve or fifteen yards wide. For at least a hundred paces in front of this, a bleak plain extended, wholly unsheltered. This plain was commanded by the rebels, who swarmed as thick as bees on the ramparts. The instant we debouched we were met by a tremendous fire from the enemy, whose gingal-balls brought down at least a dozen of our men. Had we been in line, the havoc would have been frightful. We, however, presented so small a front, that our loss was, comparatively speaking, very slight. By a mistake, Captain Thompson led his company a few paces forward, when nearly one-third of the men instantly were placed *hors de combat*. A party of volunteers advanced with scaling

ladders, but were at once, and with great loss, compelled to retreat. I never recollect witnessing a more gallant fire. I was about to call a council, consisting of the field officers under my command, when Ensign Marks of my own regiment stepped forward, and expressed a wish to lead a portion of his company to the assault. This I refused. But, as I did so in the following words—‘No, I might sanction a volunteer or two to go on and make a reconnoissance, but I cannot—will not risk the lives of any body of men’—the brave ensign took advantage of my words, and snatching from a brother officer the light duplicate of the regimental colour which we sometimes carry on a march, he dashed forward, calling on his covering sergeant to follow him. This the poor fellow did, and I beg to recommend his family to your Excellency’s best attention. Ensign Smith also

rushed out and joined in the rapid run which the others took towards the fortress. For several instants the rebels seemed scarcely to believe their eyes, and omitted to fire, reserving for the larger body their murderous volleys; but on seeing these young men dash forward (as they believed, unsupported), they recommenced their fearful assault, and in less than three minutes poor Ensign Smith was stretched a corpse. Sergeant Keenan and Ensign Marks still rushed on. How they escaped the balls that rained around them, even to this moment appears to me a miracle. The officer, it appears, was, from a recent accident, unable to swim; so, on approaching the fosse, he requested his sergeant to jump in, and instantly following him, supported himself with his arm on the shoulder of the swimmer, and thus they gained the other side. Here, however, there was no

bank whereon to land—the water actually washed the walls of the fort—so, mounting on the back of his non-commissioned officer, we could see Ensign Marks actually hewing out with his sword places for his feet in the clay wall. Bullets now came swifter and more furious than ever; but, being close under them, the rebels could not take good aim at them, and the work I have described had gone on for above a minute, when a chance shot struck poor Sergeant Keenahan, who sank to rise no more; while Ensign Marks springing from him, grasped some projecting object, and placing his foot in the hole he had made, gained a firm footing. Never can I forget the agony—the excitement of that moment. The men could no longer be restrained; they rushed forward, alike callous to danger and prudence. They naturally believed that their young officer, long before they ar-

rived, would have fallen a victim to his temerity, but they were determined, even at the imminent risk of losing their lives, to avenge his death. Just as they reached the bank (leaving many dead and wounded on the plain), they saw the British flag fly on the walls, yet no sign of surrender had been shown. They leaped into the water as the fire of the enemy suddenly slackened, and soon reached the opposite side, whence they managed, without opposition, to escalate the walls. Arrived on the top of them, they found that the enemy had fled, our colours were reared triumphantly on the battlements, and at the foot of them lay the hero of the day, severely and dangerously wounded."

Poor Emily could bear no more; she uttered a loud scream and fell fainting on the floor. In a short time, she was

brought back to her senses by the usual restoratives, and again calmed by her father's reminding her that, in the commencement of the letter, her playfellow had decidedly recovered from the injuries he had received.

"You are agitated, my dearest girl. Be calm, and I will myself endeavour to make out the rest of the letter."

"Oh! do, do!" eagerly cried Emily; "and mind, don't conceal anything from me."

"Nothing, dear Emily."

"It appears that the enemy, seeing our flag suddenly appear on the glacis, believed that we had made a lodgment on some other point, and that our whole force would soon come into action. The courage which the strength of their position had lent them suddenly deserted them, and they retreated in the utmost

disorder. Thus it may truly be said that the Peeko Fort was taken by a single individual—a fact, I believe, unparalleled in the history of war. Ensign Marks, by the loss of two of his senior officers, became a lieutenant, by rotation, on the field; and as his wound, from which he has now quite recovered, may break out again, if detained in this warm climate, I beg to recommend to your Excellency that Lieutenant Marks be promoted to the rank of captain unattached, and sent home to Europe. I also fill up the official form, submitting his name and strongly recommending him, as a proper candidate for the noble distinction of the Victoria Cross.

“Such, my dear lord, is my account of the deeds of your protégé, of whom you may well be proud. I have every reason to believe my application in his favour will be readily complied with; and, in

this case, he will probably arrive as soon as this letter, which I must now conclude by assuring your lordship how truly I am, “Your faithful servant,

“JAMES DOVETON,

“Colonel and Brigadier.

“To the Right Honourable

“The Earl of Urmstone.”

“Papa, papa—is he not a hero? only imagine——”

“My dear Emily, he is indeed a noble fellow; but you must really moderate these exuberant transports of joy.”

“Indeed, indeed I cannot. Oh! I am so happy; I must go and tell everybody;” and away ran the enthusiastic girl.

The Earl had scarcely resumed his seat when a loud cry was heard—it was the voice of Emily. He started up, and, rushing to the door, beheld his lovely

daughter, half fainting, supported by the right arm of a handsome young man of little more than twenty-six years of age. His flashing black eye, his brilliant teeth, his noble countenance, but above all, his left arm in a sling, at once announced him to the peer, who now, almost as much pleased as Emily, eagerly stepped forward to welcome Captain John Marks, the hero of the Chinese campaign.

An abler pen than mine must describe the interview which followed—one far better schooled in human anomalies must account for the fact, that tears in abundance—like drops of rain through heaven's bow—moistened the smiles of unmingled joy; and why, when recovery had chased away the pains of the past, Emily Urmstone cried piteously as her old playmate recounted

“The dangers he had passed.”

CHAPTER X.

AN UNWELCOME VISITOR.

"I WANTS to see Mr. Sydney."

"Then you must call some other time, for my master and I are about to visit Erin—our sister kingdom, as the *Times* calls it. Mr. Sydney is packing, so you had better pack too," replied our friend Mr. Coleman.

"I shan't do no such thing, Mr. Bone-polisher," rudely answered Mr. Jem Marks, for he was the visitor on the present occasion.

"You are a saucy blackguard—a *cannil*, as we say in French."

"I'll punch your cocoa-nut, Master Lickplate, as we says in English;" and

Jem held up a fist that might have been mistaken for a shoulder of mutton.

"*Bate!*" screamed Coleman, and he slammed the door in his face.

"That 'ere dodge wont pay," growled Marks, and he began hammering away with the knocker.

Coleman, having put up the chain, opened the door a few inches and demanded—

"Fellow! what do you want?"

"Your master, my jolly menial!"

"He wont see you."

"Yes, he will!"

"Who are you?"

"Tell him Mr. Marks is here on the part of his friend Mother Rearden. He'll know what I means. Come, quick! d'ye hear, eh?"

Coleman closed the door; and, in the firm hope of his master's ordering him to fetch a policeman to carry off the

intruder, he sought out George Sydney, who was amusing himself by burning some hundreds of old letters and papers.

Coleman delivered the message verbatim. To his surprise, George pondered for a moment; and then, in a tone of vexation, said—

“Show the visitor in.”

The wondering servant left the room, strangely puzzled by this new mystery.

“Marks! Marks!” muttered George; “I cannot help thinking I have heard the name before; yet I cannot tell where. This is, doubtless, some pettifogging attorney, probably armed with mysterious hints in order to alarm me; but as she cannot (for her own sake) have made any revelations of the facts, I will be on my guard and betray nothing. This wily limb of the law shall gain nothing, from our interview——”

At this moment the door opened. If

Coleman had been surprised at Jem's appearance, still more so was Sydney at the extraordinary visitor now shown in. A beard, the growth of at least a week, displayed a golden-tinted field of stubble; the uncombed hair thrust up as the fellow took off his cap. The giant form and slouching gait of the intruder filled him with wonderment and disgust, and as the fellow threw himself into a well-covered chair, and nodded to Coleman to "be off," George could not repress an exclamation of horror and annoyance.

"You're Mr. Sydney, I presumes?"

"You do presume," coolly retorted George; but the retort was as unfelt as the blow of a parasol on a buffalo's hide.

"Well, I supposes you is that gent." The other nodded assent. "Do you know who I am?—can't you guess?"

"Indeed I cannot, unless you are an

escaped Patagonian savage dressed up in sailor's attire."

"Them's fine words, but I doesn't understand 'em. Let's come to the pint—I'm Jem Marks, as married Sal Rearden."

"I trust, in her connubial state wedded to such gentle perfection, Mrs. Rearden is quite well."

"Well, she is and she isn't; she had a touch of the rheumatiz lately, so I comed for her. But I'll trouble you, my young spark, to call her by my name—Marks, Sally Marks—for the future."

At this insolent style of address, the pet of Exeter Hall felt the indignant blood of six hundred years' ancestry rush to his cheeks; but he wisely kept his temper, and the ruffian went on—

"Well, my wife had a doctor to pay, and she wants twenty pounds; so hand it over, and I'll give it to her carefully."

"I shall do no such thing. I have

already overpaid the woman for a trifling service she once rendered me."

"Whew! here's a go! You calls throttling a babby a trifle, do you? Darned if you're not a cool 'and!"

George turned deadly pale, and, sinking into his fauteuil, he covered his face with his hands to hide his fearful emotion. His worst fears had never painted such a danger. His secret—the tale that might blast his reputation, and even bring him to a felon's death—was in possession of a third person, and *such* a person—one too powerful to assault, too reckless to defy. Here was a yawning precipice over which he would probably fall during his future life. It may now fairly be admitted that Sydney had more than once formed plans to get rid of Mrs. Rearden. Yes, such had been his dream; but here was a monster—an inaccessible monster in human form—a sharer in the dread

secret that robbed him of his rest. Had a pistol been within his grasp, he would have used it on himself; but even self-destruction would not avail him. When stretched a corpse, the facts would be divulged; and he who had sacrificed much to maintain a spotless character would, in after ages, be branded as a murderer. The thought was too dreadful. George groaned, and rocked himself to and fro in mental agony.

"I say, master, don't you take on so; there arn't no harm done. Tip us the twenty, it wont ruin you, and we'll be as mum as the grave; we really wants cash just now."

"Yes," slowly replied George, determined to fight against despair; "but I was promised long since that these demands should cease."

"Well, they ain't demands," said Marks, before whose mind punishment

for extortion began to glimmer; "they ain't demands, they're merely requests."

"Well, and suppose I refuse?"

"Well, I'll sing—I'll blab—that's all."

"What! and hang your own wife?"

"Well, I doesn't know that I should be very sorry for that."

"Suppose I now send for two police-officers and forestall your tale, and paint you in such a light that your evidence would not be taken?" sharply cried George, seizing the bell-rope.

Marks didn't like the turn which affairs were taking, so he modulated his voice—

"I'm not to be bullied; I only wants justice."

Sydney read his triumph at a glance, and assumed a severe tone.

"If I give you these twenty pounds, out of friendship for my old friend Mrs. Bearden——"

"Mrs. Marks," interrupted Jem.

“ Well, never mind, sirrah ! if I do this, will you undertake to say that this is the last time I shall be annoyed ? ”

“ Well, I would willingly say yes ; but . Mother Marks is sadly awaricious. Lord love ’e ! I ’m only a babby in her hands, and you know how she sarves ’em,” added the fellow, with a chuckle.

Sydney affected not to hear the latter part of the speech, and went on—

“ Will you guarantee me that this shall be the last demand ? ”

“ Make it fifty, and may I never eat another meal if ever Sal or I troubles you again ! ”

“ But how can I rely on you ? ”

“ In the first place, I scorns to betray a pardner ; and as to my wife, hang me if I wouldn’t pison her, if she attempted such a thing without my leave ; and besides, my good chap, d’ye see, if I takes my oath, I does so volunteerily, and

I'm sure to keep it. I'm not forced to give it—on the contrary, I'd rather let matters bide as they be."

Sydney, however, saw the advantage he had gained, and his experience and reading taught him that wretches of this kind—repudiating all virtue, all law, all truth—would still occasionally keep their oaths to an accomplice—and alas! Sydney felt himself so—and after all, it was worth the trial. So he went to his writing-desk and handed over a fifty-pound note to Jem.

"Thank'ee! All's now right, and may I be lagged if Mother Marks or I ever molests you again on this score! If, however, I can at any time be of use, tell me. You knows my address."

Jem, however, who now wished to be all civility, still lingered.

"What more do you want?"

"Nothing, Mr. Sydney; you've behaved as a real gentleman, and I'll do the same."

“What, then, are you waiting for?”

“Why, I wish you’d allow your fine sarvant-man to go with me and get this note changed; not as I suspect it to be a flash ’un—no, I’m sure it’s all right; but, you sees, they might ax me queer questions about it, and if I mentioned your name it might bring you into trouble.”

At this moment Coleman came in with a note.

“Go with this person, Coleman, and get a bank-note changed for him at the branch in Burlington-street,” said George, as he retired to his dressing-room.

“Well, wonders will never cease!” inwardly ejaculated Coleman. “Give me the note; we’ll soon have gold for it.”

“You’re a good ’un, you are; you flunkies are uncommon cute, but you ain’t a-going to ’andle my flimsy.”

“ Well, then, to save trouble, I’ll change it for you,” cried the other, pulling out five sovereigns.

“ Five sovs be darned ! I wants fifty. Look here !” and he displayed the aristocratic note.

Coleman was dumbfounded. He began to think he had made some mistake ; it might be a joke—a nobleman in disguise—in fact, he began to think that no one else could so grossly insult him. So, in a rather more civil manner, he rejoined—

“ *Along à la* Bank of England !” and led the well-pleased Jem to their western establishment, where the note was quickly turned into gold.

“ *Bon-jur*,” said Coleman.

“ Go to Bath !” replied Jem ; and then, as he turned to go home, he muttered, “ Ay ! Sal *will* kick up a row and scold, but I don’t care ; it’s time to give up that

cow, it's nearly dry ; we'll see what we can make out of t'other !"

With these words he buttoned up his pocket, containing forty-nine pounds, and turned into "The Grapes," his favourite public-house, there to enjoy himself.

Mrs. Marks was ill in bed at home ; the visit to George had been the sole project of Jem. He therefore wished to be well armed with spirits ere he encountered his wife's reproaches.

CHAPTER XI.

KINGSTOWN.

It was on one of those beautiful, clear, dry mornings which so seldom visit our sister isle, in early spring, that a splendid schooner was observed to enter into the really beautiful bay of Dublin—a bay only lacking the presence of another Vesuvius to eclipse its fair rival at Naples. In some respects it is true that it is inferior; but not so to the eye of him or her who floats into its magnificent area. To the seaman it loses its best charm in the shallowness of its waters, the dangerous shoals, and the broad sands which stretch from Blackrock to the Pigeon-house; but to the tourist it is a scene of

beauty which he can never forget, so perfect in every respect is the surrounding scenery.

Lord Urmstone's yacht—for such was the vessel we have alluded to—had just passed Ireland's Eye, hugging somewhat closely the beetling hill of Howth, as a lovely young girl and a handsome young man ascended to the quarter-deck. They had never been to Ireland before, and consequently had never beheld one of Nature's most favoured spots. Brayhead arose in bullying defiance, running far into the sea, to challenge and menace the approach of the mariner. The chain of splendid Wicklow hills, broken by the greater and lesser Sugar-loaf Mountains, seemed a bold frontispiece to a work of grandeur; while the white cottages of the little town, and the surrounding villas, with their green meadows and tranquil aspect, bespoke comfort and refinement.

Presently the vessel entered the harbour of Kingstown—decidedly the most beautiful marine enclosure in Europe. The terms of delight which burst from the lips of Emily, as she beheld the lovely scene before her, instantly called up her fond father, and the next instant the astonished trio stood in wondering admiration of all around them. The officer commanding the man-of-war on the station politely came in his gig to welcome his old friend Lord Urmstone to Ireland, and in his boat the old peer, with his daughter and adopted son, were rowed ashore, and within a few minutes more, lodged most comfortably in the Royal Hotel.

The arrival of the old peer, who had once held one of our ministerial secretarieships, was soon bruited abroad, and, as great men usually proceed on to Bray, the advantage, the honour, of thus securing

an ex-minister was keenly and sensibly felt by all ranks in Kingstown, who, without appearing to do so, soon assembled in each other's houses to consult how his lordship should be treated.

"He is a Protestant, of course, and I believe a High Churchman," carelessly said Mr. Phelan to Sir William O'Flinn, as they beheld him drive past the clubhouse door.

"Then I shall not call on him—he's half a Papist already."

"Oh, I can't believe that. He was a member of Lord Raby's government."

"That alters the question. He must be a Tory and a Protestant; and as to his moral character——"

"Oh," interrupted O'Flinn, "that's his own look-out. If he belongs to the right sort, his private behaviour can be of no consequence to you or me. I suppose he'll put up for the Kildare?"

"I don't know—and, faith, I don't care. We've got old ones enough—we want some young blood, Sir William. We'll meet at the Garrison Theatricals to-morrow ;" and away bustled Mr. Phelan.

"That fellow's a Papist in his heart, I feel confident," muttered the Baronet, as his friend left him.

"O'Flynn wants to rook the young hands at whist," said Mr. Phelan to himself, as he stepped into the Dublin train.

It is a strange fact, that it is no uncommon occurrence to hear an Irishman abuse another, even his dearest friend, when absent from him ; the only balance of justice being, that he himself is sure to come in for his turn, when he is out of sight.

"I shall certainly call on Lord Urmstone in the morning," said Mrs. O'Reilly. "I must present him with some of our

new tracts; they are really very edifying."

"If you will allow me, I will accompany you," chimed in Mrs. O'Hara, "for I want him to subscribe to the '*Birds' Nest*,' the finest charitable institution in Ireland."

"I belong to the '*New Birds' Nest*,'" muttered Miss Hanahan (a stiff old maid), "and, if he takes my advice——"

"*Your* advice, indeed!" said Mrs. O'Hara; "I should like to know who *you* are?"

"What?"

"Hush! silence, ladies!" cried Lady Borsely, an Irish physician's wife, who hoped that, as the Dublinites were now everywhere seeking to find people to whose memory they might erect statues, perhaps her husband might some day figure in bronze; and above all, as Lady Borsely was a lady of title and fortune, and pro-

prietor of a handsome mansion, her chiding was well received, and at her bidding the disputants at once calmed their ire.

“Do you think we could form a deputation to point out to his lordship how truly he would be benefited at the chapel of that godly preacher, the Reverend John Stubbs, whose eloquence will probably touch the heart of the statesman, and show him, as he has done us, how utterly he is lost to all hope? This blessed revival has shown me my sure danger—my sure fall; might it not have the same effect on his lordship?”

“Oh! it would indeed be horrible,” cried Miss Doyle, a would-be young girl of sixty summers, “if the poor deluded one were tempted to attend the Mariners’ Church.”

“Some say,” said Miss Hanahan, who had not yet recovered from her spiteful

feelings, "that it is the Established Church, and really I begin to think that I shall attend it."

"For shame, Bridget! for shame!" said Lady Borsely; and then an argument somewhat bordering on what is vulgarly called a row ensued.

Let us now turn to the *young* ladies.

They had seen a remarkably handsome young man disembark. It was soon known that he was an officer, a hero, and the adopted son of a nobleman. What their feelings on this occasion were is perhaps better not described; suffice it to say, that the great majority of these truly lovely girls—for Kingstown stands pre-eminent in female beauty—determined to display their bright golden locks, set off by becoming little hats and pert feathers, their sparkling, full blue eyes, their alabaster complexions—for they are not of the coarse, ruddy school—their pearl-

white teeth, and their well-turned ankles on the pier at four o'clock, when the new arrivals would probably walk out, rather than stay at home, and only emerge as usual after "tea," and thus share with the owls and the bats the gloomy hours of darkness on their favourite promenade. A strange whim, which may possibly arise from the belief that the Kingstown beaux only visit that locality after dinner, being all day engaged in Dublin. This is just possible, for it is utterly beyond credence that any other motive can induce these Hibernian syrens to come forth after heaven has veiled her face, and hidden, not only their personal charms, but the rich dresses (far too rich for good taste), and the wide-spreading crinolines—the seeming glory of these beauteous creatures, who, in less showy dresses, would be beings little less than perfect.

If the Roman Catholic party felt any

bitter feeling at thus seeing a Saxon aristocrat, they kept it to themselves, perfectly content in the comfortable belief that, as a Protestant, he could only lord it over them in this world ; his future—unless he recanted—was already settled in the most unsatisfactory manner.

At the St. George's Club, Lord Urmstone was spoken of: his name echoed at the Royal Irish ; he was the theme of all the dinner - parties between Bray and Booterstown. In a word, the quiet peer and his unaffected domestic circle had already caused a sensation in Ireland.

CHAPTER XII.

A BENEFACTOR.

LORD URMSTONE sat at one of the drawing-room windows of the Royal Hotel, scanning with admiration the unequalled scene before him. Never had he seen anything more lovely, and as he put down the telescope, he reflected with true sorrow—with poignant anguish, that this “Gem of the Ocean,” this “Flower of the Sea,” should be disfigured as it is by rival factions, and that the sword of Heaven should be used on every occasion to hew down political enemies. Lord Urmstone was a good and really pious Christian: for the first time he felt that he was in a land where feelings of liberality in religion

were looked upon as bordering on infidelity—where the single path to bliss was arbitrarily claimed by both sects—where tolerance was counted as disbelief and bigotry a virtue. The lisping child of one party is taught to believe, as soon as it can understand, that the Saxon tyrant is treading the path which leads to eternal punishment, crushing in his downward road liberty and faith ; while on the other hand, the Protestant infant gets an apple from its proud father (as soon as it can utter the words) for drinking the health of the great and good King William, and destruction to all Papists. “Yes,” murmured the peer, as he threw down a few halfpence to a squalid crowd of beggars, who had assembled to storm his lordship—“yes, if such feelings could be modified and religious intolerance cease, Ireland would indeed be the finest country in the world.” Lord Urmstone, over whose countenance a trace of sor-

row might be easily distinguished, arising from the recent loss of his fond mother, now turned to the young couple, and requested his daughter to leave the room for a few minutes, in order to prepare herself for a walk. Emily, however, plainly perceived that there were other reasons, and with a pouting lip she quitted the apartment—agitated she knew not why—hurt at this novel procedure, and, above all, fancying that it might portend something disagreeable to the young officer.

“Bring me my desk, John;” and the order being complied with, the peer drew forth a legal document, engrossed on parchment.

“John, my dear boy, the death of my last and aged parent has fully reminded me of certain duties I owe to you.”

“To me, my lord?”

“Even so. I have brought you up from childhood, I have had you well educated,

I have treated you as one of the family, and finally placed you in the army, from which, by my wish, you have just retired."

"Most true—most true, and more. If I could narrate half the kindness—the affection you have shown me, I should feel comparatively happy. But these favours are beyond enumeration. To repay even one of them is far above my power. I have, however, a constant hope that I may some day be able to prove to you my warm gratitude."

"Enough; I know your disposition, and value it, as you will presently see. This is, I trust, the last day I shall see John Marks in this world."

"Oh, say not so, my benefactor—my more than father," cried the other, dropping on his knees; "tell me my fault—I will endeavour to atone for it. My life is truly yours. Banish me for a while if I

have offended, but do not—do not say for ever.”

“John, I was foolish. Arise; fear nothing of the kind.”

Marks again seated himself, but his looks bespoke his inward agitation.

“I was silly—childish, thus to play upon your feelings. I owe you an apology, my dear boy, for thus trifling with you. Now listen: my mother, as you are aware, died some few weeks ago. Her jointure has fallen in to swell my already large income. Her private savings she has also left to me; not fancying that I might want them, but as a token of her unreserved affection. Her maiden name was Leslie—she built a small residence in the north of England, and purchased the land around it, naming it Leslie Hall; the whole property does not exceed, according to the estimate before me, 500*l.* a year. You understand?”

“Perfectly, sir.”

“This property is now yours, conferred on you in perpetuity by the deed I now hold in my hand.”

“Oh, my gracious benefactor, this is more than I can bear—thus to endow a mere beggar;” and the young officer now shed those tears from gratitude which refused to flow for any other cause.

“Exactly; and you have just proved how rightly I have acted. None can now call you a beggar; none can reproach you as the creature of my bounty. You are not rich, but you are independent—may it make you happy!”

“My lord, my lord, I cannot speak, indeed I cannot.”

“One only condition do I annex; I have had that condition legally drawn up and properly registered; that you substitute for your surname, to which I feel sure you have no right, that of Leslie, one of

the most proud and unblemished names in England.”

The newly-enriched youth threw himself back in his chair, and, covering his face with his hands, wept aloud.

At this instant Emily, who, though above the common vice of her sex, that of curiosity, had approached the door, hearing unusual sounds, rushed in. The sight that met her view struck her with silent astonishment.

The peer, the only calm member of the party, rose, and quietly pointing to John, addressed his daughter—

“Allow me, my dear Emily, to introduce you to Captain John Leslie, of Leslie Hall.”

The poor girl stood still without speaking, bewildered by the strangeness of the scene before her.

Leslie (for so we must now call him) started up and rushed towards her, ex-

claiming, "It is true, quite true. Oh, Emily!" Here the still puzzled girl, seeing all was joy, threw herself into his arms, and joined him in his flood of tears.

The old peer, who truly looked upon both as his children, left the room, thus giving his protégé an opportunity to explain, and, truth to tell, to wipe away an intruding drop, which, in spite of his stern nature, in spite of long and hard tutoring, arose to assert Nature's rights over the cold civilization of High Life.

CHAPTER XIII.

IRISH SOCIETY.

IN the afternoon, Lord Urmstone drove out as far as Glenegary—one of the best suburbs of Kingstown, and thence proceeded to the Killiney Hill, whence he beheld another and still more magnificent view of this portion of the Irish Channel, and enjoyed that pure and delightful breeze that constitutes this part of Ireland one of the healthiest spots in the world. *En passant*, he had lunched with an old yachting acquaintance, one of the most hospitable men in the sister isle, whose good cheer and warm reception, whose beautiful villa, and whose good taste (shown by the choice selection of

articles of *vertu* which filled his residence) displayed an example well worthy of imitation. He accompanied the party on their further drive, and pointed out many of the interesting objects around them—including a glimpse of a small, quiet, sequestered cottage (for so it might be called), inhabited for many years by that once stirring leader who is said to have aimed at no less than the crown of Ireland. The quiescence and apathy of his once noisy followers probably read him a lesson on the evanescence of mob popularity.

“Yes,” said the ex-minister, turning to his daughter, “yonder is the residence of one who, forsaken by his former supporters, lived to reflect, alas ! not only on what he had allowed his stormy passions to make him, but also to paint in vivid colours that which his good birth and brilliant talents might, by proper

application, have raised him to. Mischief and misconduct may still be rife in Ireland, but, thank Heaven, the spirit of national rebellion has ceased to exist."

They now drove back to the town, and, alighting at the pier, sent the carriage away. Here the English family were truly struck by the wondrous beauty of the Kingstown ladies. Amongst at least three hundred of them, there scarcely appeared one plain woman—the great novelty they remarked seemed rather to be the almost entire absence of that "fat, fair, and forty" class, which so largely preponderates in all assemblies on the opposite side of the Channel. In thus quoting the expression used by our fourth George to convey "ripe beauty," it is not meant to say that there were few women of forty years of age—far more astounding indeed was the fact; for, out of the whole crowd there were not a dozen ladies

whose ages might in any way be taken at a middling average. Of the three hundred, two hundred, at least, were young girls under twenty years of age, and about fifty above half-a-century in age. The *belle passée*, the sharp widow of thirty-three, the fading charmer of forty-five, were all absent, or so feebly represented as to be fairly eclipsed by the two extremes; while the beaux consisted more or less of a dozen young officers in plain clothes, known from their confident lounge and bronzed faces; three or four Kingstownians on a day's leave of absence from their respective offices, and a host of young boys, who, for the moment, seemed highly prized by the opposite sex, for they chatted and flirted with them, probably to keep these accomplishments in working order during the absence of the youths' fathers or brothers, who could not arrive for another couple of hours.

After a few turns, the usually popular

promenade was deserted, and his Irish friend pointed out to Lord Urmstone that the military band had arrived from Dublin, and were actually at that moment playing beneath his lordship's windows. So the party adjourned there, and were indeed startled to see the magnificence of dress indulged in by our sisters of Erin. Their overwide crinolines—their sweeping trains—their frail bonnets, displaying the varied beauties of a full green-house within, and the plumage of an aviary without, called up, from its exaggeration of fashion, a smile on the face of the old peer.

An aide-de-camp now came up and presented his lordship with a note from his Excellency the Lord-Lieutenant, inviting him and his family to dine at the Vice-regal Lodge on the following day. Lord Urmstone at once wrote to accept this pleasant "command," and, after a short interview with the officer, who turned out

to be the son of an old friend, resumed his walk in Gresham Gardens.

“Do you go, my dear Wolfe, to the Lodge to-morrow?” asked he of the gentleman with whom he had lunched.

“Oh dear, no; I am out of the set.”

“What do you mean?” asked the other. “Is the court circle here so very exclusive?”

“By no means. You will find assembled what you will possibly deem a strange mixture—high and low, aristocratic and doubtful; highly-titled tourists and local hangers-on, made up by a large body of the vice-regal staff and other military officers.”

“Is his Excellency, then, strong in his patronage of any particular religion or party?”

“By no means. He invites politicians of every shade; and as to creeds, he is

far more tolerant than any native of this country."

"How, then, is it you describe the circle around him as savouring of——"

"Oh, that is quite intelligible. His Excellency is one of the most amiable and kind-hearted men in the universe. In true learning and knowledge, few can excel him ; as a statesman in the team of government, he has proved his abilities. But his amiable qualities outweigh all these ; he would not only be kind to all, but intimate with all. He receives and accepts the one thousand hangers-on who exist alone in the atmosphere of the mimic court. He, I believe, first sets down on his list the officials he is bound to entertain, and then fills up the remainder with those passing visitors who thrust themselves into a semi-regal throng, for which neither their birth nor qualities ever intended them. They

crowd round the walls of Dublin Castle, and, assuming the tone of the existing Government, are ever ready to join any subscription, or support any scheme proposed by the authorities. When you have been some time in Ireland, you will, I am sure, deplore the servile flunkeyism—for it is the only term that truly describes it—displayed by some of our countrymen; a flunkeyism which truly disgusts the really patriotic and high-minded Irishman, the proud child of Hibernia's ancient race."

Wolfe now took his leave, and the trio, after changing their dress, once more sought the captain's gig, which conveyed them on board the guard-ship, where they had agreed to dine with Captain and Mrs. St. Croix. The former might once have been, but was now no longer, a handsome man. One, however, of his greatest personal disfigurements was the feature on

which the peer gazed with the greatest admiration—his face had been injured in the service of his country. He had been struck by a musket-ball while performing a daring act of valour. He had won his high naval rank by true bravery and merit. He was that popular son of our isle, an undaunted British tar ; and Lord Urmstone accounted himself highly honoured in thus sitting down, even in a circumscribed cabin, to dinner in company with such tried warriors as Captain St. Croix and Captain Leslie—with two such lovely women as Mrs. St. Croix and his own darling Emily.

CHAPTER XIV.

DUBLIN CASTLE.

"FROM the many opportunities you have had of observing the manners of the Chinese, you can possibly inform me whether Christianity, as it has been asserted, is known amongst them."

"I scarcely understand you," replied Leslie, turning to his interlocutor, a very handsome man, distinguished alike by his aristocratic bearing and pleasing tone of voice.

"Have they been visited by the light of the gospel?" demanded the first speaker.

"I should say, though I had few

opportunities of judging, that, like every creed throughout the world, there are certain shadowings of the *Truth* bestowed upon them. But, in the general acceptance of the phrase, I should assert they are decidedly the most ridiculous idolaters in the universe."

"Ridiculous is scarcely the proper word," replied the other, sternly, drawing himself up.

Leslie turned away; why or wherefore he could not tell, but he had already imbibed a dislike to his neighbour, and mentally set him down as a hypocrite. He would willingly have struggled against the belief, for which he could not but acknowledge to himself he had no just cause, but the instinctive feeling of aversion had entered his mind. As is often the case in society, why or wherefore he could not tell, sudden affections arise; but antipathies are not only still

less traceable, they are more permanent in their nature."

"It is a fact, strange as it may appear," said Sir Patrick O'Mahon, at the other end of the vice-regal table, to one of the staff officers immediately facing him—"it is a fact patent to all, that some of the largest fortunes have been accumulated in this country by persons who have risen from the very lowest grades of society."

"True; I have heard as much. Labourers, bricklayers, and waiters have amassed large fortunes. But all the wealthiest individuals who have earned, by regular industry, brilliant positions, have almost invariably been Scotchmen and Englishmen; see your most celebrated and talented printer, look at the monster drapery-shops, note the names of some of your most thriving merchants and speculators, and you will find they

all belong to the class alien—as designated by the great Dan.”

“Ah, it may be so in Dublin.”

“Try your next city, Limerick, where some of the most successful provision-dealers, where many of your leading men, are imports from the sister country; but, above all, the three great lace factories, which give employment to almost all the female industry in that city, have been introduced into Ireland, and are still presided over by enterprising Englishmen.”

“Yes,” chimed in a young sprig of nobility, “that’s true; besides, look at the number of English persons who, *bon gré, mal gré*, have suddenly become possessors of the largest estates in Ireland. Why, even a life assurance company now holds the princely acres of Dick Martin, while a worthy alderman of the city of London and a wealthy Scotch farmer have——”

"Enough, enough," interrupted the highly-irritated baronet; "it is scarcely well-bred thus to attack a country which receives you so hospitably."

"I am not to be lectured on manners," dryly observed the officer.

"What can you expect?" murmured the young nobleman, shrugging his shoulders.

A threat hung upon the lips of Sir Patrick, but he suppressed it.

"Has your Excellency any further intelligence respecting the attempted murder of Lord Grantchester?" asked a high dignitary of the Church, addressing the Lord-Lieutenant.

"Nothing whatever."

"It is a sad and painful affair. Have they taken up the ruffian?"

"He is probably spending a pleasant time of it in the country, in spite of our soldier-like non-thieftakers," observed an

unwelcome guest at the Lodge, invited there *ex-officio*.

His Excellency frowned, but did not appear to notice this attack on his pet force.

“Can you not assign some reason for this outrage? Lord Grantchester has ever been considered most kind to his tenantry, and whenever distress has visited the South of Ireland, has ever been the first to remit their rents.”

“His brother,” replied his Excellency, pointing to the stranger who had addressed Leslie, “Mr. George Sydney, has only just arrived, and is probably in possession of the latest intelligence. What do you think, Mr. Sydney?”

“I am inclined to think that it was the act of some fanatic Papist.”

“It is more likely to spring from a deeper interest in his lordship’s death,” sharply and loudly retorted a leading

member of the Irish bar, a staunch Roman Catholic ; “ no Papist, as you designate the assassin, could inherit on his decease.”

George Sydney turned deadly pale, and then his cheek became scarlet—his eyes flashed with rage ; but, controlling his emotion with an effort almost superhuman, he mildly replied, “ It may be so, though I was not aware that members of the bench ever prejudged causes or motives. In England——”

“ You will be late for our garrison theatricals, Captain Smithson,” said his Excellency, desirous of stopping the unpleasant altercation about to burst forth.

“ True, your Excellency ; but I am amply repaid for the extra trouble it will give me, since Lady Emily has kindly promised to honour us with her presence.”

“ You seldom fail in your applications.”

“ Well, I believe I am fortunate,” replied the young man, with a smile of

pleased vanity and the unmistakeable lisp of a guardsman.

Leslie sat on thorns. He did not see any marked pleasure in the manner of Emily, nor any gratification spring from the fop's attentions; so why feel annoyed? and, even if he had, it was surely no business of his; what right had he to interfere? Yet, notwithstanding all this, her brother by adoption felt very uncomfortable, and wished the good-looking young fellow a thousand miles away.

"Who do you think I met in Paris last season?" asked a newly-arrived aide-de-camp; "the once celebrated Lady Urmstone." His Excellency coughed loudly, others tried to stop him, Lord Urmstone sank back in his chair, and the tears started into Emily's eyes. The blundering speaker, however, was blind to all this, and went on—"She's still a wonderfully fine creature. Do you know ——?"

“Allow me, Lord Arthur, to introduce you to Lord Urmstone?” quickly interrupted their noble host.

It was now the turn of the silly babbler to look foolish. He stammered something, and probably would have made matters worse; but his Excellency, with that taste which ever distinguishes him, started up, and, in a light-hearted tone, exclaimed—

“Do not accuse me of any want of hospitality; but our carriage awaits us to convey us to the garrison theatricals, which will not commence till our arrival; so *allons*, messieurs—mesdames; Lady Emily, will you accept my arm?”

And thus ended, in painful feelings and chafed tempers, an entertainment designed to increase the happiness of the higher circles; clearly illustrating that excellent rule which tells us that we may safely leave our meal to the super-

vision of our French cook, but that the wise selection of our company can alone be undertaken by ourselves, since a solitary cynic or an ill-assorted pair will destroy the calm gusto of a Lucullian feast.

CHAPTER XV.

THE THEATRE.

THE Theatre Royal, Dublin, is a very handsome edifice, and, when filled as it was on the evening we speak of, presents a most brilliant appearance. The performance was given in aid of a popular charity; the actors were to be composed of officers of the garrison. The Lord-Lieutenant had announced his intention of being present; the boxes, pit, and gallery were consequently crowded with a well-dressed audience; the ladies being in evening dress, the military beaux in full uniform. To one unaccustomed to such a sight, the *coup-d'œil* was positively dazzling. On the arrival of the vice-

regal party, the National Anthem was played, and loudly chorused by an enthusiastic audience. An occasional address was well spoken by a young cornet, and the performance proceeded in the usual unequal style which distinguishes the efforts of theatrical amateurs.

Emily was delighted to find that religious scruples forbade George Sydney to enter a playhouse; she was therefore relieved from those looks of marked admiration which he had cast on the fair heiress, to her great annoyance, during the dinner-party. Seated next to her father, with her old playmate Captain Leslie leaning over the back of her chair, and an agreeable sub-secretary ready to give her every information touching the persons present, Emily might be said to be perfectly happy.

She was not a little surprised, however,

when some speech having been delivered which might be construed into a sneer at the Irish people, a loud groan, accompanied by hisses and catcalls, proceeded from the gallery, which, to her no less astonished gaze, on looking up, she perceived to be filled with well-dressed young men: these were no less than young students from Trinity College, who in Dublin fill the gallery of the Theatre Royal, and unhesitatingly pronounce their opinion on the pieces and actors produced before them. These strange critics were no less vociferous in their applause when anything flattering to their country was spoken; nor did they stand on much ceremony with the actors, to whom they frequently called out, addressing them by their proper names, and praising or censuring them, as they thought proper. These strange liberties did not seem to shock the rest of those assembled, such

a mode of criticism being the usual habit of the frequenters of the principal Hibernian theatre. The grossness of former times, however, has much diminished, and the greatest objection now to be urged against this peculiar manner of approving or disapproving, is the extreme noise which these learned young gentlemen make.

On the other hand it is to be urged that no better judges of acting or of music can be found. Between the acts, it is by no means an uncommon occurrence to hear some of the finest concerted pieces sung in the very finest style by the Trinity youths ; while their enthusiastic gallantry knows no bounds. The warm ovations proffered to their favourites ; the magnificence of the spontaneous offerings ; the manner in which they not unfrequently draw the fair actress or songstress back to her house amidst a blaze of torches, prove their warm hearts and

sound judgments ; their great fault is an undue nationality, which condemns all wit, however brilliant, that can possibly reflect upon their apparently idolized country—a country which they do not, however, hesitate to abuse on ordinary occasions.

Points of religion, too, are subjects sure to draw down a storm of censure or approval. Talk of cutting off the head of a king, or dethroning a prince, not a word will be said ; but if the actor unhappily speaks of burning a bishop or striking a minister of their church, he will probably never be allowed to appear upon the boards again : thus the selection of a play becomes indeed a difficult task. No second-rate singer can be foisted on an Irish audience ; a false note, a single turn omitted, will be at once remarked and denounced by the classic gallery ; while a certain popular tragedian was once forced to forego his favourite part of Hamlet, in

deference to the opinion of the troublesome gods who chose to consider the gravediggers' scene as irreligious, and insisted on the omission of the burial procession in 'Richard the Third.' Nothing less than the discriminating talents of the present lessee (Mr. Harris) could make the Theatre Royal succeed.

The performance on the present occasion was brought to an abrupt close by one of the nicest actresses on the stage approaching too near the footlights; her hoops, miscalled a crinoline, came in contact with gas, and in a moment the poor girl was on fire. Ere, however, it had time to injure her, a dozen young officers were on the stage, and Miss ——, in a state of insensibility, was carried into her dressing-room—happily, uninjured.

The green curtain, however, fell, and on his Excellency rising and retiring, the entertainment came to an end.

With little difficulty Lord Urmstone's carriage was found, and the coachman desired to return to Kingstown, the party being all somewhat fatigued by the civilities that had been offered to them.

CHAPTER XVI.

AN ACCIDENT PREVENTED.

THE hired vehicle in which the peer and his family returned to Kingstown, was one of those old-fashioned carriages drawn by a pair of horses, so universal in their use some half a century ago, when the convenience of broughams was unheard of, and, when paraded in public, were saluted by the rather disagreeable sobriquet of a "*demi-fortune*"—a name which was meant to imply that the owner could not afford to keep more than one horse, and consequently was a fair subject for the sneering remarks of his richer neighbour. These foolish notions have, however, passed away, and the old traditional is seldom made

use of by members of the fashionable circle. These somewhat cumbrous coaches are, for the greater part, hired as hackney carriages, or, in the more technical language of the stable-boys, as glass coaches.

Somewhat worn out by the continual attentions kept up during the vice-regal banquet and the subsequent amateur performance, the trio were right glad, on entering the conveyance, to throw themselves back in corners, and, to confess the truth, then and there fell into a profound sleep, rocked by the easy springs, which swung to and fro like a cradle as they travelled along the smooth and well cared for road which leads from the Irish metropolis to her favourite suburb.

What the retrospective dreams were which now visited the minds of the sleepers it is impossible to say ; suffice it to relate, all were buried in a calm slumber,

when a sudden jerk awoke them, and Leslie, starting up, lowered the window and looked out.

In another moment, even before the peer had collected his scattered senses, while Emily was yet unclosing her eyes, he had burst open the door and jumped out. The action was seen by the waking girl, who uttered a loud scream, and Lord Urmstone, naturally becoming alarmed, endeavoured at once to discover the clue to the scene before him.

For an instant the carriage jolted over rough stones, and the horses were proceeding with accelerated swiftness, when suddenly their speed was checked, and at the same instant the figure of a man was seen falling from the coach-box. By this time the vehicle had come to a full stop, and Lord Urmstone jumped out and at once solved the riddle.

The coachman, during the performance

at the theatre, had unhappily indulged his propensity for drinking ; and, in a state of intoxication, had endeavoured to drive the party to Kingstown, with the assistance of the footman, who was in almost as helpless a state as himself. The air had increased their confusion ; objects began to swim before their eyes ; and, in a few minutes more, the reins dropped from the hands of the driver. The horses, finding themselves thus set at liberty, at once increased their pace, and, crossing over some new-made road, in a few seconds would have upset the carriage into a deep dyke, when Leslie, jumping out, had, at the risk of his life, checked their wild career, and then climbing on the coach-box, had from thence hurled the two drunken men, and seizing the reins, had once more brought them under proper control.

For several minutes the carriage proceeded quietly on its way ; the father and

daughter within it devoutly offering up a prayer to the Throne of all goodness—a prayer of thanksgiving for their late delivery from danger—a prayer in which their kind preserver's name was not forgotten. Filled with the chastened thoughts that follow a good man's address to his Creator, they had leaned back in silent thought, when suddenly an outside car dashed past them ; torches were borne on it, and, by their light, the peer perceived that it was bearing forward in haste two human bodies. At a second glance, he perceived that the seeming corpses were no other than the insensible forms of the drunken coachman and the footman, who were thus carried back in seeming triumph to their respective houses.

No wonder, then, that Lord Urmstone, on alighting, was greeted by a series of inquiries relative to the accident, and a general hope that “his lordship has not

been much hurt, nor her ladyship, nor the young gentleman either ;” while a clamour of female tongues formed a running accompaniment to the troublesome attentions of mine host and his numerous staff.

In the dining-room sat a quiet, sedate-looking gentleman, who rose as Lord Urmstone entered, and, in the mitigated tongue called the Dublin accent, explained that, being a physician, he had called to see whether he could be of any use.

“None in the world, doctor. I’m equally obliged to you, but on this occasion I’ve no cause to trouble you.”

“Indeed ! Faith, I heard that several of your limbs were broken.”

“None, I can assure you, doctor.”

“Well, my lord, if I can be of any other service——”

The peer began to think the practitioner rather intrusive, and, in that highly

dignified manner which our nobility can so well assume when they choose to adopt it, he bowed the smooth-tongued son of Æsculapius out of the room.

Scarcely had he done so, when a large, coarse-mannered man was announced as Sir Murdoch O'Kilmen.

Lord Urmstone bowed.

"I did myself the honour of calling, hearing that you have been overturned, that your daughter had dislocated her shoulder, and that your life was miraculously saved by an aide-de-camp of his Excellency, who caught you as you were falling over the rocks. The driver, I am sorry to hear, was killed on the spot."

"I am much obliged to you for the kind interest you express, but I must at once disabuse your mind of the fable which has been imposed on you: not one word of the narrative you have heard is true."

“How provoking! I’ve just repeated it at the Club.”

“We take a different view of things—I rather feel thankful that the report is untrue.”

“Possibly so, my lord; but I unfortunately staked my veracity on its correctness. Are you sure no part is true?”

“Not a syllable.”

“Ah! then, you wont deny you dined at the Castle?”

“Really, Sir Murdoch, or whatsoever your name may be, I am not here as a subject for your cross-examination.”

“Very true, very true; but I am really sorry; that is——My name, my lord, is Sir Murdoch O’Kilmen, the most celebrated surgeon in Dublin; and I rushed from the Club, where I was playing whist with the high-sheriff of Fermough—a thorough-paced Orangeman—for the purpose of setting the young lady’s shoulder.”

"Had you inquired, sir, you would have heard that I have already seen and dismissed one medical man."

"Yes, yes, I know that; but I thought you did so from principle—the fellow is a rank Papist."

"And you?"

"A staunch Williamite."

"Then allow me to tell you, Sir Murdock O'Kilmen, surgeon and Williamite, that I know no difference in Christian denominations; and, as an old man, I strongly recommend you to drop these idle and wicked distinctions."

"If I did, I can tell you, lord as you are, that I should lose my best friends."

"If friends are only to be won and preserved by religious intolerance on either side, I can only say that happy is he who lives friendless in this lovely country. Good evening, sir. You are perfectly welcome to repeat my words at your Club,"

"I should be turned out if I did."

"The sooner the better, Sir Murdoch, if such are the feelings of your company. I wish you good evening—I feel tired."

Need we add how very strong were the expressions of gratitude now offered to Leslie; these he turned off with proper modesty, and had already stepped back one pace to allow Emily to pass, when, passionately seizing his hand, the lovely girl imprinted a glowing kiss upon it, then uttering, in an agitated tone, "God bless you, my noble preserver!" she rushed upstairs.

The nobleman turned away his head—in anger, in joy, or in sorrow—the young soldier could not perceive. Then, slowly following his daughter, he sought his room, but Leslie perceived that his hand trembled.

Our hero threw himself in a chair, and

for a full hour indulged himself in dreamy fancies—fancies we are forbidden to disclose. He then retired, but not to sleep; the first consciousness of a hopeless but devouring love already burnt within his bosom.

CHAPTER XVII.

ATTEMPTED MURDER.

"ALLOW me to present you my daughter," said Lord Urmstone, rising from his chair. "Allow me, dear Emily, to introduce you to my oldest and best friend, Lord Grantchester."

"I am indeed delighted at being thus formally made acquainted with you, Lady Emily, though it is by no means the first time that we have met," cried the Earl, advancing and shaking Emily's hand with the warmth of an old friend. "I have known you from your birth, I have often admired you in childhood, but any flattering anticipations I then indulged in are more than realised in the

lovely girl I see before me. Excuse my seeming familiarity; but remember, I have long known you and loved you as the daughter of my respected friend Urmstone."

"I am far from forgetting the many acts of kindness I received at your lordship's hands in early youth; besides, had I for a single day forgotten you, my father's daily praises would have continually reminded me of the good qualities of the Earl of Grantchester."

"You must indeed pass a happy life in the society of your daughter. It must more than compensate for the want of a male companion."

"I do possess that treasure within my domestic circle."

"Indeed! a nephew probably? I know that you have no sons."

"True; but I have an adopted son,

whom I value as if he were my own offspring."

"Indeed! and does your daughter approve of this addition to the family?"

"Ah! that I do," hastily exclaimed the lovely girl, blushing. "When you know Captain Leslie, I am quite sure you will like him."

"Leslie! I have heard that name before. A relative of yours was so called, was she not, Urmstone?"

"Most true; this young man has assumed her name on taking her property, which I have made over to him on his return from China."

"Has your protégé been out there?"

"Yes, he was in the —— regiment."

"Bless me! how strange! the very corps in which the hero of the expedition served. Of course you have heard of him?"

"How?"

"What! have you not heard of the youth who may be said to have taken, single-handed, a Pegoo Fort? I hear he is to be the lion of the season."

"Indeed," said Emily, with a sly glance
"I am sure *we* shall be rejoiced at it."

"Why so?"

"Because my adopted son Leslie is, I believe, the very gallant youth of whom you speak."

"He is then well worthy of your friendship, and I can only add that I shall feel proud to know him."

"Your lordship will soon be gratified, then," chimed in Emily, "for here he comes."

At that moment the door opened, and Leslie cheerfully entered. Lord Grantchester advanced a pace to meet him, holding out his hand to exchange civilities, when, looking up suddenly, he started back with a scream of terror.

“Agnes! beloved Agnes, can it be possible!” then, passing his hand over his face, he seemed by a mighty effort to calm his agitation, and uttered in an under-tone—“No, no, it is impossible. I am mad: but he is the very image of her.” Soon recovering his usual demeanour, he stepped up to the astonished young man, and in the most courteous words assured him that his accidental likeness to one very, very dear to him, had for a moment upset his better reason. He now begged to apologise for thus giving way to a momentary agitation, and concluded by assuring the youth how proud he felt in thus making the acquaintance of one whose daring deeds were the theme of every tongue.

Mark Leslie, though somewhat taken aback by the strange behaviour of the Earl, and subsequently abashed by the broad flattery of the nobleman, yet

managed to reply in suitable terms; then, turning to Lord Urmstone, he informed him that he had secured post-horses to convey them to the beautiful seat of Lord Powerscourt on the following day.

“Kindly inform the landlord that Lord Grantchester has in the most friendly manner consented to share our dinner, and desire him to provide accordingly.”

“It shall be done, sir,” said Leslie, who, after whispering a word in Emily’s ear, left the room. Emily soon afterwards followed. The Earl of Grantchester’s manner had undergone a complete change; the smile that had lit up his countenance on entering had fled, and for some moments he threw himself back in his chair, and shutting his eyes, observed a strict silence. This he broke by abruptly asking, “Where

did you meet with Captain Leslie? is he connected with any of your family?"

"Not in the least. He is of humble birth; said to be the son of one who bears a very indifferent character. Indeed, it was to snatch him from the evil example of these people, that I first adopted him."

"You made use of the words, 'said to be.' Is there any doubt respecting his parentage?"

"None, I fear."

"How did you become acquainted with him?"

"He saved my daughter's life when she was a mere baby. He was then a stripling, but even thus early showed courage, for he plunged into the stream into which Emily had fallen, and, at the risk of drowning himself, saved her."

"Noble boy! you did well to adopt him. I know not why, but my heart

yearns toward him ;” and again Lord Grantchester became silent.

Dinner was soon afterwards announced, and the younger members of the circle having joined them, they proceeded to discuss the meal.

A witty northerner had dropped in, and having been asked to remain, vainly endeavoured to instil some warmth into the party. Full of humour, he told anecdotes of the most laughter-stirring nature. He punned upon every sentence uttered ; he made the room ring with his hearty and jovial laugh. But he alone was cheerful. Lord Urmstone was imperturbably grave, the younger couple were out of spirits, and Lord Grantchester sat with his eyes fixed on Captain Leslie, to his great annoyance ; so the wit of the excellent magistrate fell on ungrateful soil. His cheerful smile changed by degrees into a look of disappointment, and he made the

excuse of an early-starting train to leave the party, having urgent reasons, as he pleaded, for a speedy return to Dublin.

When Emily had quitted the room, Lord Urmstone felt conscious that it was his duty to commence the conversation, which he did by asking Lord Grantchester the particulars of the late attempt made upon his life.

“And has no one been arrested on suspicion?”

“No one.”

“The police, then, must surely be to blame.”

“Not individually; it is rather the organization of that force than any lack of zeal on the part of its members, that I blame. The magistracies are now become the perquisites of men of interest rather than men of intelligence. Their salaries are so good, their work so light, that they are reserved by Government as

crowning gifts to reward and provide for men of influence, as repayments for services in other branches. There are nearly five hundred of these lucky persons, their salaries varying from two hundred to five hundred per annum. They report direct to their friends in Dublin Castle, and thus act on orders from a distant authority, instead of uniting in close co-operation with their brother magistrates. Thus a double power is created, and the unpaid justice, who resides within five miles of the scene of an atrocious murder, is often left in ignorance of the outrage committed almost on his own estate, till the Dublin authorities have been made fully acquainted with it."

"These are the resident magistrates, styled, in my day, Stipendiary Magistrates."

"Exactly so; but mark me, Urmstone: I am far from blaming these gentlemen

—I do not quarrel with them, but with the system under which they act. I have not heard any complaints of their omitting to fulfil the duties that devolve on them ; but I do most seriously quarrel with the nature of those duties which make them country gentlemen instead of police magistrates.”

“ But there are other officers ? ”

“ A host of them, styled by all sorts of fine names ; their number is legion, and they are well paid. In their favour I must say I never met with a more gentlemanlike or more active body of men. In a ball-room they are perfectly at home, and, dressed exactly as officers of the Rifle Brigade, they certainly form the chief ornament of our provincial parties.”

“ But what are they—how do they rank ? ”

“ They are all gentlemen—some of them, I believe, half-pay officers. In

status they are nothing more nor less than the chief constables of your time, but thus placed to a certain degree beyond the immediate control of the local magistrate. These gentlemen are far from being as efficient as those under the old *régime*. But here again, no fault lies with the individuals. They fully and zealously carry out the views of their chiefs, and if the Government insist on making them military captains instead of police officers, it is no fault of theirs."

"But the force itself—the common men, I mean—seem to be the finest body of men I ever saw," chimed in Leslie.

"And so they are. For military purposes I have little doubt of their value, but as policemen you will, I fear, find them most inefficient, seeking rather to please the eye than to detect crime. These men are strapped and buckled up in tight green uniforms, on their heads they have

bright shining soldiers' shakos, on their hands they are bound to wear gloves, a tight girdle is fastened round their waists, to which is attached a pouch filled with heavy cartridge, and a sword-bayonet dangles beside their thigh nearly three feet in length; they are drilled, and employed on excise and other civil duties, they are encumbered with a heavy rifle, and thus proclaimed to all the district, thus exhibited to the sight of skulking runaways, they are desired to become thief-takers! a task to them (as it has turned out) next to impossible. Seen at a great distance, their approach is instantly signalled through a country ever ready to shield the assassin, and thus the police have no chance of overtaking them; and indeed, if they did, encumbered as they are, the mimic soldiers would have but little chance of capturing them. The police force look right well at drill—they

form an imposing feature in a procession, but to run after a flying malefactor would be indeed a scene ludicrous to behold."

"Then there is little chance of the would-be murderer being taken?"

"Not the slightest."

"Can you trace any cause?"

"None. I have seldom been in the country, and have most certainly created no enemies. Mr. King, my agent, is the kindest of men, and beloved by my tenantry. The only way I can at all account for it is the bad spirit evoked and fostered by certain violent branches of the Press who live by pandering to the worst feelings of an excitable people, and often stir up angry passions by inventing grievances which do not exist. To pull down respectability, to destroy order, may fairly be said to be the object of the journals I speak of."

Emily now sent in to summon the

party to the tea-table. Arrived there, the conversation became general, and the sincerest and kindest utterances of friendship were warmly reciprocated.

Ten o'clock arrived, and as the Earl wished to reach Dublin by the last train, he rose, but requested a few words in private with his noble entertainer previous to his departure. The young people also rose, and insisted on leaving the room.

The two peers were thus left together. For a few moments both were silent ; at length Lord Grantchester spoke.

CHAPTER XVIII.

SYMPATHY.

“I TRUST, my dear friend, that you will pardon the strange request I have made, and that that which I am about to ask will not be deemed the offspring of mere idle curiosity. A feeling has this evening sprung up in my breast—a maddening emotion, for which I cannot account—I am almost driven to frenzy by it.”

“Do—do be calm,” chimed in Lord Urmstone, who really began to think that the Earl had taken leave of his senses. “Tell me the cause of this agitation, and in a word say how I can serve you.”

“The youth who was here just now—tell me all you know about him.”

“With pleasure; though I fear the information will be scant. Until the day on which he saved Emily’s life I never beheld him, and from that time until he entered the army he never quitted my roof;” and here Lord Urmstone narrated his interview with the Marks’s, his adoption of their son, and the subsequent manner in which the youth had conducted himself.

“And they have never sought to see him since he became a resident with you?”

“Never!”

“It is strange—strange, indeed. It is scarcely natural that, if they were really his parents, they should never have endeavoured to hold communion with him.”

“Remember, my dear Grantchester, that such an attempt would have entailed the forfeiture of the allowance I now make them.”

“There is something in that—it may be as you say; yet I can hardly reconcile it with my opinion of parental affection. But let that pass. Tell me, my dear Urmstone, what are you going to do with this young man? He tells me he is not going to remain in the army. Have you provided him with any future—do his inclinations point to any other profession?”

“No. To tell you the truth, I have never thought of it. Leslie is young yet, and has already a fair competency.”

“Would he accept a post of ease and confidence? The salary, a thousand a year.”

“That would indeed be noble. Is the vacancy in England, Ireland, or abroad? I should not like my adopted son to reside in another country.”

“I will be candid with you. I am growing old; my brother, on whom I

reckoned for support, is so much engaged—at least, so he assures me—with theological struggles, that he can find little time to devote to me: I therefore want an *alter se*—another self, a confidential secretary—to superintend my affairs and carry on my somewhat extensive correspondence. Now I have this night formed such an attachment for your protégé, that, if he will accept the post, he may at once consider himself nominated to it.”

“My dear lord, your offer is most handsome, and I can only say I shall strongly advise him to accept it. I will communicate it to him in the morning.”

“Not so! Now. Ay, I see you start in surprise; but I can know no rest till I have Captain Leslie’s decision.”

Lord Urmstone certainly began to doubt his noble guest’s reason; but he hastened to reply—

“As you wish it, I will at once seek him in his own chamber, and convey to him your most liberal offer.”

“Do so, I pray you.”

The ex-minister left the room. During the ten minutes he was absent, Lord Grantchester paced up and down the apartment, a prey to inward agitation. At length, Lord Urmstone returned.

“His answer—quick!—What does he say?”

“He desires me to say everything that is grateful to your lordship——”

“Yes, yes; but his reply to my proposition?”

“For the present, he with many thanks declines it.”

“I thought so—I thought so. I am doomed—doomed to be disappointed.” And, with a hasty salutation, Lord Urmstone rushed out, and was soon *en route* for Dublin.

Emily soon after stole down, and in those peculiar coaxing tones which soften the heart of a father who believes in the perfection of his daughter, sought to know what that grave Lord Grantchester had wanted with "dear papa."

The application, accompanied as it was by the fond kiss of filial love, was not to be resisted, and the pleased father at once recounted to his loved child the substance of his interview with Lord Grantchester.

Had he watched his daughter's face during the narration and seen the changes of her countenance as he proceeded, he would at once have read the deep interest she felt in all that concerned her adopted brother. When he came to the conclusion—to the decision of Leslie—the blood forsook her cheeks, she almost gasped for breath. In the next, her colour returned, and, as he stated the refusal of

his protégé to leave him, she exclaimed, in a tone of triumph—

“ Ah, I knew it! I could have staked my life on it. Dear, dear John. Oh, how I love him! I love him better than ever. How noble, how good he is to give up all for us!”

“ It was indeed most grateful of him, but I yet hope to persuade him to accept this most eligible offer.”

“ What! would you advise him to leave us?”

“ Dearest girl, it is for his own good. As a sister, you should counsel him to take advantage of Lord Grantchester’s offer. We have both a sincere affection for him, but it must not blind us to the truth, nor allow any selfish feeling of ours to be a bar to his promotion.”

“ Well, I dare say you are right, but couldn’t you get something as good for him at home from your friends in power?

They offered you a seat in the Cabinet. Surely you could get a trifle like this for an adopted son."

"My darling child, you scarcely estimate properly the value of the offer made him. But we'll talk it over in the morning. Good-night, dear girl; remember we have a fatiguing day before us."

"That's true; so good night, papa!" She imprinted a kiss on his cheek, and sprang up the stairs. As she closed her bedroom-door, she uttered aloud—"God bless him!" Did she mean her father? We fear not.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE ACCOMPLICE.

A BRILLIANT fire burned in the apartment we have already described as belonging to George Sydney in the Albany; a tray covered with refreshments stood on the table; a change of dress was placed on the back of one of the arm-chairs—all denoted an expected arrival.

Our old friend Coleman was taking a last review of all these preparations, when the well-known knock of his master announced the appearance of George Sydney. Not a moment was lost in opening the door, as the evening was cold and the hour somewhat advanced. The obsequious valet uttered a sincere welcome and ushered

the young man into his comfortable saloon.

"I trust you had a pleasant journey, sir," observed the servitor, in a low tone.

."Have you got a cold, that you mumble in that way? If not, speak out."

"I thought, perhaps, that you might not like your arrival to be generally known," rejoined Coleman, with a wink and a leer somewhat more familiar than he would have dared to have indulged in some twelve months before; the pecuniary embarrassments of their superiors having often the effect of reducing their status, not only in their own opinion, but also in that of their servants. Thus Mr. Coleman did not look upon the Honourable George Sydney, after his sojourn in a sponging-house, with half the deference he had regarded him before.

"And why, sirrah, may I ask—why should I desire to conceal my arrival?"

“ Well, sir, I trust you will excuse me”
—for the valet felt rather awed by the cold tone of his employer—“ I did not mean anything, sir. But, if any of your creditors——”

“ Enough. If any call, show them in.”

“ Sir——”

“ It is true. You will do as I desire you.”

“ Then, sir (if I may make so bold), you mean to pay them; for Mr. Vaughan, the bootmaker, and Mr. Taylor, the coachmaker, were here this morning, and said——”

“ Never mind what they said; it is immaterial to me. You will, however, remark that I know of no *Misters* among my tradespeople. Vaughan is a bootmaker, Taylor a coachbuilder; but *Mr.* Taylor indicates an equality I am indisposed to admit.”

“ Well, sir, I will be more cautious in

future; and I'm sure that when you pay them, they won't stand on any difference about what you like to call them."

"Coleman, I never said I was going to pay them."

"La! sir, this moment you said——"

"I know what I said, and you would know also, if you would listen. I told you that I was in no fear of arrest—nor am I. The fact is, that I have just been attached for a time to the Russian Embassy. No one can, therefore, molest me."

"Indeed! I was not aware——"

"It is unnecessary that persons in your rank of life *should* be aware. I will, however, explain to you the fact. All persons (even menials) belonging to the Court or to Foreign Embassies are free from arrest for debt. I may, therefore, laugh at any attempt to interfere with my personal liberty."

A knock—a single, dry, hard knock was heard. Coleman went out to answer it ; he speedily returned.

“ I came, sir, to say that there is a horrible-looking man, who says he must see you. For my part, I think he’s a bailiff’s runner, and I should certainly have slammed the door in his face, but you said you did not care for such people ; so I came in to ask for your orders,” and a sly smile stole over Coleman’s face—almost a malicious one.

“ Show the man in,” coolly said George, who was just devouring a slice of *foie gras* ; “ show him in.”

The servant seemed confounded, but covering his confusion by a hasty flight, he went out once more and returned, showing in a rough, sinister-looking man, closely muffled up, but who, on entering the warm room, at once threw aside his wrappers and displayed the features of one

equally well known to master and man—the hard face of Jem Marks.

“Leave the room, Coleman. Sit down, Mr. Marks,” said George, with ill-suppressed anger.

“I wonder what he’s come about,” muttered the valet, as he reluctantly left the room.

“And now, sir,” asked Sydney, in a stern voice, “what brings you here, after your solemn promise never to trouble me more?”

“Well, that’s fair; I did make the promise, as you says, and I means to keep it.”

“Then why are you here?”

“Oh! it ain’t on that little business at all. Mother Marks more nor once wanted me to come, but I wouldn’t. Honour’s honour.”

“Then what brings you here now?”

“Oh, I comes as a mutual friend

atween you and another person, a friend of mine."

George started in anger; an exclamation of disgust was about to escape from him, but with the cold command over his temper which years of deceit had taught him, he merely asked between his serried teeth, "And pray, sir, who is your friend?"

"He's a Hirish gentleman as is lodging with my wife."

"And may I ask what I can possibly have to do with a person in his rank of life?"

"A good deal, I suspects, Master George," cried Marks, winking and laughing at his own joke.

His rage almost overcame Sydney's better reason; but he kept his feelings in restraint, and merely asked—

"Whence does the man come?"

"From Limerick."

George winced, and quickly demanded his name."

"Pat Geary."

The great man was at once subdued; he turned deadly pale, paused for a moment, and then asked, in an agitated tone—

"What does he want with me?"

"A passage to Ameriky, and ten pounds in his pocket."

"And supposing I refuse?"

"He'll blab, upon my soul he will! He swears he'll not swing for nothing."

"And you know all?"

"All!"

"How did you learn it?"

"I'll tell you. This here chap was a working where I sometimes does odd jobs, when a day or two ago one of the Bobs come and inquired arter him."

"Who are the Bobs?"

“The police, as you calls ’em—the peelers. Well, he comes to me and asks me to make him invisible. So, as old Sal had a room to spare—a room as no beak in England could find out—I takes him and hides him, and after two days says I to him, ‘Pat,’ for he told me that was his name like, ‘Pat,’ says I, ‘if you can’t pay you must cut.’ ‘Well, I don’t like that,’ says he. ‘Pay, then,’ says I. ‘I hain’t no money.’ ‘What did you come to London for, then?’ says I. ‘Because Ireland were a little too warm for me,’ says he. ‘Not that I cared much for them dressed-up peelers; they couldn’t catch me in a year; they’re too strapped up to run, and they’re too much of the gentleman-soldier to follow the likes of me.’ ‘Why did you come, then?’ chimes in Sal. ‘I’ll tell ye why,’ says he. ‘A great lord, or something of the kind, gave me five pounds to shoot his brother, and

promised me ten more if I did it all right like. He told me he was a poor tenant, and the chap as I was to shoot was a gauger, so I didn't mind it much—I'd have done it for half the money.' ”

“And pray,” asked Sydney, “what has all this narrative to do with me—these drunken dreams of a fugitive Irishman?”

“Well, you'll see. It appears that when he went into Tipperary to change the five-pound note, the banker-chap made a fuss about changing it, and asked him where he got it, and then took it to another chap with a powdered head, who examined it through his spectacles, and said as it was all right, for the name as was written on the back was George Sydney! Ah! I told you you'd start—the only brother of the Earl of Grantchester!”

George became a prey to agitation, and

more than once uttered, "Fool! idiot that I was!" and similar self-accusations.

"Don't take on so," soothingly chimed in Marks; "there bean't no harm done yet."

"Of course not, of course not! How is it proved that the note, though signed by me, had come from me direct? Why is Lord Grantchester's name introduced?"

"Merely because there's a reward put out of one hundred pounds to anyone who might capture the villain as shot at the Hearl of Grantchester. And as to the note, he went into Limerick and found out there that the description of George Sydney and the pretended tenent was, as it were, all one; so he looks out for that gentleman, and hearing from them chaps as allays writes in favour of boys of his kind, that his employer had started for these here parts, he worked his way over

in a Limerick vessel, under the very nose of the peelers."

"And how came you to know all this?"

"Oh, that ere's very simple. It appears, as I told you, he was a week or so in London and couldn't hear nothing of the bird he wanted, and, as I said before, he was obligated to take a lodging at our Sal's, and one evening, when he was a-talking mysterious like about his employer—'What's his name?' says I. 'I shan't tell it,' says he. 'Then you're a fool,' says I, 'for perhaps we can help to find him for you, and if there's a chance of that, we wont turn you out.' So upon that he up and tells us all. So I volunteers as a mutual friend, without a-giving up your address, to come and see you, and probably save you from travelling across the mill-pond.' "

"In a word, what do you want?"

"Well, I likes reasonable talk. There's

fifteen pounds for the Irishers' passage, and then he wants ten pounds in his pocket, and then there is two pounds and seventeen bob for my missus; and I don't think, as an old friend, you'll grudge me a fiver for all my trouble. Altogether, you see, thirty-three pounds seventeen. (Marks was not an exact reckoner, but he seldom lost by his calculations.) Suppose, Master George, we say thirty-five, and I'll see Pat Geary safe off in the next vessel."

"And if I say no?"

"Well, it ain't for me to say a word."

"Can't I silence the fellow with less?"

"Impossible. You see he has already told it to Sal and me, and if he gets out of my crib and gets his tight hat on, he'll blab it to all the company, in spite of all the oaths he may swear. He's quite the gentleman when he's sober, but when he has his grog aboard, he's an awful talkety devil."

“You know you have me in your power.”

“Oh ! not by no means.”

“You know you have. Here is the cash (and George examined every note to see that it was not endorsed). Take it, Marks, and mind I look to you to see him safely off.”

“Oh ! upon my honour.”

The smile of contempt and scorn which this assurance elicited from George is not to be described. Fortunately for him, the ruffian did not see it.

“Well, Master George.”

“I wish you would call me Mr. Sydney.”

“Oh, Lord Sydney, if you likes it. Here’s my address, and if at any time my services can be useful——”

“Be off,” petulantly interrupted the other ; “my greatest hope is that I shall never see you again.”

“Oh, I shan’t intrude, I promise you. Good night.”

“Good night,” replied the other, shutting the door on him. “I’ll burn his filthy address.” He took up the scrawl, but on second thoughts he added—“No, no, I’ll keep it;” and put it into his pocket.

“Coleman, give me my night-light. I’m tired of these charitable appeals;” and he entered his sleeping-chamber.

The valet looked grave; he knew that his master had uttered a falsehood, for he had listened at the door. But, fortunately for George Sydney, he had only caught disjointed words. “Master George,” however, rang in his ear, and as he retired upstairs he muttered—“I know better; that ill-looking chap is no beggar.”

CHAPTER XX.

THE ANONYMOUS LETTER.

It had struck eleven o'clock before George Sydney, attired in a brocade dressing-gown, lounged in to breakfast, when, taking his seat, he deliberately helped himself to the various luxuries before him with that unstudied ease that bespeaks one accustomed to *recherché* fare—one of those *gourmets* who, cradled in the lap of Wealth, seem to take the richest gifts of Art as a proper homage to their superior taste. The country gentleman eats his cold venison pasty or his kippered salmon with a rustically eager appetite; the ordinary Londoner gobbles up his beef-steak or gulps down his new-laid

eggs with indecent haste ; but to the high-bred, pampered aristocrat, the meal before him is an object worthy of deliberate study. Thus, if wine still taints the palate, the lordly man of taste will probably select salmon cutlets *à l'Indienne*. To a pure tongue, the backbone of a pheasant or even the breast of a doubly-tainted grouse may not come amiss ; while a caviare toast or the more delicate preparation of a woodcock's trail, is by no means a bad *avant courier* to a cup of green tea, sweetened by sugar-candy and diluted by the cream of goat's milk. Thus prepared, the gastronome may hold out till luncheon, the intermediate time being occupied by reading letters recently arrived by post and answering them, giving audiences to country constituents, or debating points of dress with a tailor or a bootmaker. Indeed, between the shadow of breakfast at eleven

and its reality, styled luncheon, at, say, about two o'clock, the rough work of the coming day may be got over.

Such was the almost daily routine of Sydney's life, and in accordance with it he had just finished his first meal. He had looked over the deaths and marriages in the *Morning Post*, and risen to ring the bell, when the ever-attentive Coleman brought him in three or four letters on a silver salver.

At two of them he merely glanced. He at once perceived they were what is styled begging letters; the third bore the name of his hated coachmaker (for we always hate those to whom we owe money) on the impressed seal. Without reading them, the trio were committed to the flames. The last that remained bore the Dublin post-mark. It was addressed in the handwriting of Lord Grantchester, and consequently claimed attention.

George rather seemed to shrink from opening it. This only made his valet more anxious to know the contents of it ; and in the hope of gleaning the news, or at least discovering from some word dropped, or from the general manner of his master, the purport of it, he purposely lingered in his duty of removing the breakfast things. George, however, seemed determined to afford no clue. He said nothing, but laying the letter on his desk, he contemplated it with serious calmness. Coleman was thus baffled and obliged to leave the apartment, without having acquired the slightest inkling of its nature.

The door had hardly closed when Sydney nervously tore open the letter. As he read it through, his various emotions may be better imagined than described ; his best hopes were on the eve of shipwreck. A mysterious terror filled

his breast as he read the missive, which ran thus :—

“MY DEAR GEORGE,—

“You will be surprised to hear that I am in Dublin, *en route* for England, and still more so when I tell you the cause of this sudden alteration in my plans. The day after you left me I received an anonymous communication, of which the enclosed is a copy :—

“‘Lord Grantchester, your wife is confined in an asylum because she says her child was born alive. Make it worth the writer’s while, and the writer will prove that your lady speaks the truth, and that she is no more mad than you are. You must come over to England at once, and address a letter to X. Y. Z., Post-office, Great Russell-street; and according as you pays, so will you be restored to health and happiness.’ So no₂ more. I knows you and my lady both.’

“Here, my dear George, the mysterious communication ended. But so great was the shock to my nerves, already sadly weakened, that I took to my bed, and, by the desire of my friend Sir William, called in medical advice. The physician who attended me strongly recommended change of air. Sir William, to whom I showed the note, equally strenuously desired me to follow up the clue which thus holds out a hope of happiness to me. So I at once determined to return by Cambridgeshire to Grantchester House, where I trust to find you within a fortnight from the date of this letter. Be sure to be there, as I much wish to consult with you about this strange incident. I long to see you and obtain your valuable counsel, by which I shall be entirely guided.

“Your affectionate brother,

“GRANTCHESTER.”

Three times did Sydney read the letter, and each time felt more alarmed at its contents.

“Yes, if my brother comes,” soliloquized the now wretched man, “I am lost! The letter can only be written by one individual—the monthly nurse. But what of that? She has me in her power; and the question now resolves itself into the simple query, How can I stop her mouth? Yes, that is the question. Means, indeed, might be found; but if even she is destroyed, her ruffian husband shares the secret, and will reveal it. To bribe her to keep further secrecy would only be to ruin myself; when she has sucked my last pound she will turn on me. No, that will not do. My only chance would be to involve her still deeper in crime. Ah! a bright idea! If I were once Earl of Grantchester, I could then, perhaps, satisfy her cupidity;

it is therefore clearly her interest to assist me, and in so doing I'll take care that I keep myself clear. It is a risk—it is a dreadful deed,—but it is necessary to my safety. This female fiend has driven me to the very edge of an abyss she herself shall leap into. Ay, my mind's made up; I'll at once write to her. Where is the horrid scrawl the fellow gave me? Ah! here it is. There, that will do. I little thought how useful I should yet find the old harridan. Now, then, *her* life or mine!"

George rose and rang the bell; Coleman entered.

"Take this note to Little-street, St. Giles's. Make haste back, and admit no one except the person to whom this letter is addressed. I would be alone."

Coleman bowed obediently. George threw himself back into his chair to *think*.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE HOUSEKEEPER.

GEORGE had been down to Grantchester House and prepared the servants for their master's early arrival. He had been to his clerical publisher and left a MS. pamphlet entitled "The Unseen Idols." This had been written during his stay in Ireland, and was intended not only to prove that ambition, avarice, gaming, and other passions were as much idols worshipped by men as the stone figures or bronze statues of Roman antiquity, or the wooden images of Caffreland, but also to prove the idolatry of the Roman Catholic Church—a favourite theme on which the pious Sydney was

never tired of descanting. He then drove into the City, and desired his stockbroker to sell out £1000 from the funds—he being sole trustee for this sum—which had been left by a dying parent to an infant child. As the money could not be called for for some years, it is possible that the trustee thought he might place it out at better interest—at least, so he alleged to the stockbroker. He next called at the houses of two of his most troublesome duns, and promised them each a third of their bills within forty-eight hours; looked in at the Oxford and Cambridge Club, where he partook of a light dinner; and, dismissing his brougham, walked home at about seven o'clock, there to await an expected visitor's arrival. Nor was he disappointed in his expectation; for within about half an hour we may see Mr. George Sydney and Mrs. Marks comfort-

ably seated beside a blazing fire, with wine and liqueur-stands of spirits on the table; for the former well knew the woman's weak point, and had prepared accordingly.

Sarah Marks was now an old woman bordering on seventy years of age, but still hale and strong, though so much altered in facial appearance, that he of the Albany scarcely recognised her when she first entered the room with her husband.

George, however, was of the opinion that three was bad company, so he suggested to Jem that Coleman should accompany him to a neighbouring tavern, and there afford him everything he might require to eat or drink, while he (Sydney) had half an hour's cosy chat with his wife. To this arrangement Marks at once assented. Coleman relished the idea of the orgie, but he scarcely approved of

being thus sent away ; he was, however, perforce compelled to seem pleased, and in a few moments the virtuous couple were left *tête-à-tête*.

George rose, locked the door, and put the key into his pocket.

“What is that for?” demanded old Sally.

“For our mutual security. I wish to talk on matters which I do not desire to be overheard. Nay, don’t look so alarmed, for although, as you see, I carry a loaded pistol in my pocket—(and here he showed one, but instantly returned it to its resting-place)—I really mean you no harm ; although, were I to shoot you on the spot, you’d richly deserve it.”

“Oh, sir !” tremblingly screamed Mrs. Marks, “you wouldn’t, surely !”

“Of course not. I have no intention of injuring you ; but, as you have placed not only my character but my very exist-

ence in jeopardy, I demand the candid truth."

"I will speak the truth."

"Swear that you will."

"Well, I swear."

"That wont do. Kiss this book ; kiss it fairly. That will do. Now, answer me the questions I choose to put. But first allow me to read to you a letter addressed to Lord Grantchester;" and George read out the contents of the anonymous note.

The old beldame rocked to and fro in agitation within the ample fauteuil.

"You have heard the letter?"

"I have."

"Did you write it?"

"No, so help——"

"Enough; you are already on your oath. Now tell me, do you know who did write it?"

"No."

"Do you know who caused it to be

written? You hesitate. It wont do. Yes or no? as you value your life."

"I do know who had it writ. It was our Jem."

"And what did he and you mean by it? You cannot restore the child to life that you so cruelly murdered!"

"Come, Mister, that's a going a leetle too far. If I did destroy the child, who was it as paid me to do it?"

"I really can't tell," coolly and calmly replied George.

"Well, if that ain't—but never mind. Let bygones be bygones. All as I can say is, that I did not want Jem to write that 'ere letter. But he's sometimes wery, wery obstinate, and so he wouldn't be said nay; and if the child's dead, it can't do no harm."

"What do you mean by the *if*? Did you not kill it?" fiercely asked the other.

“In coorse I did ; but it ain’t about that, I suppose, as you sent for me to have a talk. It ain’t no doings of mine, and you’d a-better lecture Jem than me. I’ve been true to you, Mr. Sydney, and I don’t expect to be snubbed, so here’s your ‘ealth,” and she tossed down a glass of raw spirits. “Ah ! that’s good ; it warms one after that washy red stuff as you calls clearit.”

George pondered for a moment ; he scanned his companion from head to foot ; he watched her glance, and saw that she was in the right mood for his purpose.

“Mrs. Marks, if there was a basket of gold lying on your parlour-table—I mean gold that rightly belonged to you,—and that the door was open, and that you had only to go in and take it——”

“Yes.”

“And suppose a dog stood in the doorway and flew at you, and wouldn’t allow

you to go in and get it, what would you do to that dog?"

"I'd kill him. Ay, that I would."

"But supposing that dog was a man?"

"I'd do the same, if he stood between me and my gold."

"And would you do as much for a friend?"

"Well, that's a loss of another colour. I'd kill any man or dog that kept me from my rights. But I ain't a going to put my neck in a halter to gain nothing by it; not I," and the old hag chuckled.

"Of course not, Mrs. Marks; but suppose you were well paid for it—say, a thousand pounds?"

"I'd throttle our Jem for half the money."

"Well, then, listen. Let us suppose that I am the friend who needs your services, and am willing to pay well for them. Mind, I only say suppose I am.

Well, then, picture to yourself that the gold I spoke of meant the Grantchester estates, and that the dog that kept me out of them was my brother."

"I'd kill him, if I was you!"

"Mrs. Marks, you are evading my question. I do not ask your opinion as to what *I* should do; but I ask you, what would *you* be ready to do? Speak. No hesitation; on your answer, perhaps, my life and happiness depend; perhaps yours."

"Well, for a thousand pounds?"

"I'll give it."

"It's a done bargain, then; that is, if you can show me how it is to be done without risk."

"Can you disguise your appearance so that no one can recognise you; not even your husband?"

"I can. I have done so. But I am not bound to tell you when or where,

though I once saw you when you little suspected it."

"Well, then, listen. My brother's housekeeper has just quitted him, in consequence of her failing health. Lord Grantchester has desired me to have the whole of his establishment ready to receive him in a day or two. I shall ride over in the morning and tell the steward that I have hired a housekeeper, a Mrs. Thompson, a person I have long known. You will go there in the afternoon and take a note from me. Now, can you play the part?"

"That I can, and if any of them twigs me I'll——"

"Mrs. Marks, you must drop those slang expressions and assume a more dignified demeanour."

"Well, I can do that. When I was young——"

"Never mind your youthful days,

rather remember the present risk. If you are discovered, you know the consequences."

"I ain't afeard. But how's the job to be done? Is Jem to help?"

"Oh, by no means! Indeed, you must swear to me that you'll not even make him your confidante."

"My what?"

"That you'll never tell him anything about it."

"But how can we manage it?"

"We! we! Remember, I have nothing to do with it. *You* alone must carry it out."

"Then I shan't have nothing to do with it."

"Oh, as to that, for a thousand pounds I can find plenty of others, although, as an old friend, I gave you the first chance."

"Well, that's kind of you, and as you says, a thousand pounds ain't to be

picked up every day. But you know, Mr. Sydney, I'm getting oldish, and I ain't very strong, and if it came to a struggle, I might get the worst of it."

"All this, my dear friend, I have foreseen. Look here (and George took a phial filled with clear liquor from his pocket)—look here; one drop a day for six weeks would kill an ordinary man, two months would kill a giant. Now, a confidential housekeeper could surely manage to——"

"Oh, you are clever; our best lags ain't nothing to you. Of course I can do it."

"And then, you see, there'll be no sudden death—no inquiries, inquests, or anything of that sort."

"Upon my life I could hug you, you're so uncommon knowledgable."

"I'll not trouble you to do so."

"Well, give me the bottle."

“Not so,” replied the other, returning it to his pocket. “It shall be given you all in good time, with proper directions ; but hark, I hear them coming up. Unlock the door. That will do ; appear to be intoxicated, and then Marks will take you away without asking any questions, and in the morning you can pretend to have forgotten all.”

“Ah ! that is prime. Egad ! do you know, I shouldn’t mind getting drunk in earnest ;” and with this she seized the rum and drank off nearly half a pint, then fell back apparently insensible in her chair.

Coleman and Jem now entered.

“Take that drunken woman away,” angrily commanded Sydney ; “why did you leave her here so long ? I could not retire, lest she should set fire to the house. Marks, I fear that you are little better. Coleman, see them safe downstairs.”

And with a look of contemptuous pity,
Lord Grantchester's brother left the room
as Coleman conducted the inebriated
couple down to the hall.

CHAPTER XXII.

A FEARFUL ACCIDENT.

DETERMINED to enjoy the magnificent scenery of this part of the country, Lord Urmstone had preferred a travelling-carriage to the more ordinary transit by railway, the road passing through a rich and varied country, while the railway, clinging to the sea-shore, presented little more than a rugged line of coast—a line which could only be admired by the engineer, who in this and the still further branch to Wicklow, might well revel in delightful enjoyment, since some of the tunnellings and aerial galleries on this road are far more interesting than any in England.

Arrived at Bray, where his lordship had expected to meet with an old friend, he merely stopped at Breslin's Hotel for the purpose of procuring a light luncheon and its necessary accessories, which he had determined to enjoy in the grounds of Lord Powerscourt. He also procured the services of one who offered to act in the double capacity of cicerone and waiter; and thus provided, the excursionists proceeded to one of the sweetest and most romantic spots fashioned by Nature either in this or in any other country.

The party were all in high spirits, and after enjoying a delightful stroll through the grounds, they sat down to their improvised meal within sight of the celebrated waterfall—a waterfall which attracts the gaze of thousands of strangers every year.

The permission thus to enjoy their banquet on this favoured spot was an

especial favour granted to the old peer, who seemed to throw off twenty years of his life as he gazed on the youthful pair before him, and inhaled the fresh pure breeze that came cool and refreshing from the Wicklow hills.

They were in the midst of their enjoyment when a messenger stepped up and presented Lord Urmstone with a telegram. Like true natives of Great Britain, all eagerly began to speculate on the "whence" such a missive could have come from? Who could have sent it? How could their movements have been traced? Expressions of surprise were loudly uttered—conjectures wildly formed. At length the peer turned to the boy who had brought it, and naively asked who had sent it.

"Faith, then, your honour, it's not myself that knows. But I'm surely think-

ing your lordship's honour might find it out, if ye opened it and read it."

"It's strange I never thought of that;" and in some confusion he opened the despatch. "Ah, it's from Lord Grantchester," said he aloud; then continued to read——

"If I may make so bowld to ask your lordship, is there any answer?"

"None, my lad;" and the boy disappeared.

"Should you like to hear the contents?" asked Lord Urmstone.

"Oh, by all means."

It ran thus:—

"MY DEAR URMSTONE,—

"Having heard your intention to visit Lord Powerscourt's this morning, I telegraph to Bray, and thence desire my communication to be conveyed to you by

hand. I have made up my mind to cross to England in the Ulster steam-packet to-night; the shock I have received will account for my not staying longer. I merely write one line of adieu in order to impress upon your mind that the offer I last evening made is still, and will be for some months, open to the acceptance of Captain Leslie.

“Yours ever truly,

“GRANTCHESTER.”

All joined in regretting the strange freak of the noble Earl. Lord Urmstone felt pride in thus finding how highly his protégé was valued; Leslie felt proud at the opportunity given him of showing his gratitude to his benefactor; while Emily felt proud of the youth's rejection of honours and wealth, because she could not help thinking, something—— Altogether, their regrets at Lord Grant-

chester's departure were not unmingled with satisfaction.

Their meal over, they again approached the waterfall. "I should like to taste the water," cried Emily, with all the coaxing tones of a spoilt pet who knew that her wishes were laws to those who surrounded her.

In an instant our hero had flown back, and having got a glass, plunged it into the fountain, and handed it filled with liquid crystal to the beauteous girl, asking at the same time, "Is there anything else you'd like, dear Emily?"

"Yes," said the wayward girl, triumphing in her power—"yes, do you see that blue flower which grows from the rock, and almost kisses the cascade as it falls? I should like to possess that."

"You shall have it, then," determinedly cried Leslie; and the next moment he began to scale the rocks.

The poor girl screamed out in agony, beseeching him to desist. She assured him she was only joking. If he valued her good opinion, he would return. Indeed, indeed, the feat was impossible. "John! John! come back! You distract me! Wretched girl that I am! I was mad to dare you to such an enterprise! Return, if you love me!"

Lord Urmstone joined in the eager prayer, but all in vain. The very assertion that the deed was impossible only urged the youth on, who, climbing from shrub to shrub, and balancing himself on ledges of rock that not unfrequently gave way beneath his weight, still endeavoured to reach the flowret, which grew some fifty feet above the spot where his friends were standing. The poor girl put her hands before her eyes to shut out Leslie's danger. Even the ex-minister felt the cold chill of fear steal over him. Leslie alone appeared

happy and calm ; he still climbed upward, smiling as he overcame each danger, and occasionally turning his head to inspire his party with confidence by glancing on them. At length he was within three feet of the desired object ; he gave a sudden spring and grasped the flower, but in so doing the ledge on which he stood gave way, and he was precipitated down to the first rock, which breaks the fall, and thence rebounding, he fell at the feet of Lord Urmstone and Emily in a state of happy insensibility. The latter swooned, but soon recovered consciousness, and with cries of terror assisted in bearing her adopted brother into the carriage, which was at once brought near the spot.

The now wretched father and daughter drove into Bray, and instantly sent out for the best medical advice. An eminent physician and no less celebrated surgeon soon arrived and examined the injured

man. During the period of examination poor Emily was excluded from the chamber, but remained on the stairs, and on her bended knees offered up a prayer for the companion of her youth, mingling her orisons with terms of censure on her own wicked folly in thus having by a mere childish whim placed the life of her father's adopted son in jeopardy.

The few minutes occupied by the doctors in their task seemed to her at least as many hours, and she was actually stretched on the landing-place overcome by agitation when they reappeared.

Lord Urmstone rushed up and raised her.

"Thank Heaven, Emily, there is nothing serious—not even a limb broken! His escape has been miraculous. The pain of his contusions causes the groans you hear. He may possibly remain insensible some time."



Emily uttered no word, but the slight movement of her lips and her upturned eyes clearly portrayed the grateful prayer of thanks which she silently offered to the Giver of all blessings.

“We will send a draft, my lord, almost immediately. It will probably cause him to sleep—a state into which he may very possibly fall without recovering from his present insensibility. This is most desirable, and his nurse must be strictly cautioned on no account to wake him.”

“I will not do so,” said Emily.

“You?” demanded her father.

“Yes, papa, I will be his nurse. My folly caused this accident; it is my duty to watch beside him. Nay, argue not, I am determined nothing shall prevent me. Doctor, have you any further directions for me to follow?”

“None,” replied the senior; “but I fear yours will be a painful vigil.”

“And has not his been a painful accident? Papa, urge me not. Gentlemen, I shall be his nurse.”

The medical men bowed.

Lord Urmstone returned with her to the chamber; a housemaid was appointed to share the lovely creature's watch, and her father retired to his room.

CHAPTER XXIII.

FIRST LOVE.

It was a fine morning. The sun was darting its bright rays through the unshuttered windows which looked out on the sea. Emily had arisen from her seat after an uneasy vigil to close the blinds, as Leslie, waking from his sound slumber, came to consciousness, and gently turning on his couch, asked, "Who is there?"

"It is I, dear John; I sat up with the nurse in case I could be of any use."

"Emily!" exclaimed he, "dearest Emily, is it possible? Surely you should not have been allowed thus to fatigue yourself for my sake. Indeed, I fear this

silly accident has caused you a great deal of trouble."

"Not so—not so. But say, how do you feel?"

"Bruised and somewhat sore; but in all else as well as ever."

"Thank God!" warmly cried Emily, as falling on her knees she offered a devout and grateful prayer to the Creator of all blessings for the escape of her beloved friend.

As she concluded the nurse approached, and with that instinctive tact which this class so often possess, seeing her distress, said,—

"Please, Miss, could you spare me for ten minutes to take a cup of tea? I always have it at six;" and without waiting for a reply, she glided from the room.

John had been silent. His eyes were closed, and none could have told from his placid look how warmly, how

strangely his heart beat; how his pulse thrilled with equal pain and joy as he thus lay in seemingly calm meditation.

“Emily, dearest,” he at length said, in a suppressed tone, “you love me! you love me too well!”

“I do love you, indeed, but not too well!”

“You make me miserable by the confession, for, alas! I fear your feelings are but an echo of my own—a reflection of that adoration I feel for you.”

“And why should I make you miserable, dear John?” inquired the artless girl, taking his hand; “why should you thus regret to find that I love you—love you dearly, and have done so from childhood?”

“Emily, Emily—dearest Emily, this should not be.”

“What! do you not, then, love me?” suddenly cried the abashed girl.

“With all my heart and soul. Words are too cold to express my adoration.”

“Why, then,” cried Emily, now lighting up into bright smiles—“why, then, thus regret to find it returned? But stay; perhaps you think me too bold. I should not have exposed my feelings so openly. It is unmaidenly. Yes, yes, I see it all. You think me——”

“Not so, darling; not so.”

“I fear it is. But, then, recollect we have been brought up together. I have been used to tell you all my thoughts. I have no reserve from you. I knew you loved me, and I thought you would be pleased to find that I reciprocated it.”

“And so I am. The knowledge is ecstasy to me. It is the highest boon which Heaven could bestow. But alas! what will your noble father say to the nameless ingrate who has won the heart of his child?”

“Oh, John, he loves you tenderly. He knows that to separate us would break my heart, and he will, for my sake, sanction our love.”

“And shall I, the creature of his bounty, take advantage of a father’s love to rob him of his daughter, to sully, by an alliance with a beggar’s brat, the offspring of one of our proudest houses?”

“Oh, do not talk so.”

“No, Emily; you must conquer this feeling; you must calm down these sentiments, and look upon me as a grateful dependent upon your father’s bounty. Think of me as a brother, if you will, but nothing more.”

“What, then, will be my fate?”

“Noble and generous, courted alike for your beauty and talents, your rank and wealth, you will proudly take your place amidst the first daughters of the land.

Admired and beloved by all, you will soon forget, or at most remember as a once dear friend, the soldier of fortune who will at a distance watch your career and offer up a daily prayer for your prosperity. Yes ; one embrace ; one only and for ever !” And he pressed his lips to those of the poor girl, who was now crying, overcome by strong hysteria.

At this moment the nurse re-entered the room, and commending his loved Emily to her care, he turned away to conceal his own emotion. The well-instructed servitor (for she had been listening at the door all the time) led her half-fainting charge from the room, with the usual recommendation offered by such people on similar occasions, generally ending in— “Cheer up, Miss ; cheer up. All will yet be well. Here is your handkerchief, Miss. Lean on me. Cheer up, cheer up. Sunshine after a storm !” And thus

saying, she led the weeping Emily from the room.

As the lovely girl quitted the chamber, Captain Leslie threw himself back fairly exhausted, and burst into tears. In such a display there is nothing unmanly. The pent-up feelings of manhood as much demand a vent as those of even the most delicate female. Yes; the fast-falling drop has many a time bedewed the cheek of the hero. There are occasions when such emotion is ennobling. In the words of Haynes Bailey we find it thus graphically expressed—

“Go search the foremost ranks of Danger’s dark
career,
Be sure the hand most daring there has wiped
away a tear.”

And why not? Why should not the youth give way to his feelings, as his overwrought mind scanned the past, the present, and the future? Shall we say that he felt pained by the discovery he had

just made? Far from it, in spite of that highly honourable feeling which told him that he must fly the dearest object of his every hope, he still exulted in possessing the only heart he ever coveted. Proudly, as he thought on this, would a blush of triumph light up his speaking countenance, only to be chased as shudderingly he thought over the ruin he was bringing to her he professed to love—the agony he was entailing on his kind and generous benefactor. Yes; he had but one course left—that of flying her for ever. But could he forget her? Never! And then again, would she—could she—forget him? Alas! he dared not, even mentally, to solve the question. What had he desired? what had he sought or expected? To live near her—to hover round her in silence—to be her guardian and her slave. Alas! poor human nature. He little dreamed how light a word, how small an accident, might overturn this

beautiful Platonic scheme. It is true he had sometimes asked himself how he would like to see his Emily married to another. With the blind folly of egotism, he had almost persuaded himself he could forward such a step. Did he think so now? No. He lived for her; she lived for him. In that pure and artless manner in which true innocence is recognised, she had confessed her love—she had told him of her attachment; an act unfeminine and bold in the woman of the world—a bright proof of unsophisticated candour in Emily. Brought up together, hourly exchanging thoughts and opinions, there was no forwardness in this disclosure. Leslie valued her for it. He would never have dared to own his attachment to her. A happy accident had revealed Emily's emotions. Lord Urmstone's adopted son was at once the most happy and the most miserable being in existence.

CHAPTER XXIV.

HONOURABLE FEELING.

It was about three o'clock in the afternoon of the same day that Lord Urmstone was aroused from his studies by a knock at his dressing-room door, for, in lieu of a better, he made use of this chamber as a study. In another minute Captain Leslie stood before him, evidently suffering considerable pain, and leaning on a thick stick for support. The hero of China almost staggered into the room, and threw himself helplessly into a chair. The peer, alarmed at his pallor and visible agitation, started up and approached him.

"You are ill; you should not have left your room."

"I shall be better presently; give me a glass of water. I feel easier now."

"And why thus foolishly quit your couch?"

"I wished to speak to your lordship."

"Why, then, my dear boy, did you not send for me? You well knew I would have visited you instantly."

"You are all goodness, my lord. But I had a communication of importance to make to you."

"Why are you thus formal, John? You seem to address me rather with respect than affection. I feel hurt."

"Not so, not so. Son never yet loved father as I love you."

"Well, well, I believe you. But why this agitation?"

"My kind, my noble, my generous benefactor; alas! I must leave you."

“Leave me!” almost screamed the peer—“leave me! and why? Surely nothing can have occurred to offend or hurt you. If you have any want unsatisfied, you have but to speak, and it shall be supplied. If you dislike this country, we will return to——. But to leave us. Impossible! It would not only break my heart but that of your sister.”

“My lord, it pains me beyond expression to say that I am compelled to do so.”

“Compelled! What can you mean? Who shall dare compel you to leave my roof?”

“Oh! ask me not.”

“Nay, I insist on it. I know you too well to believe that you would trifle with me. Who, then, or what is it, which calls on you to leave the house?”

“I really would rather not say. Be-

lieve me, my kind benefactor, that it is no idle whim, no capricious fancy, that thus urges me to flight."

"Flight! The term is strange."

"But true. Again I must repeat, I am *compelled* to fly."

"By what compulsion?"

"Honour."

"John, you speak in mysteries; you deal in dark hints with one who has never had a secret from you. Explain, then, the meaning of all this."

"My lord, my lord, I had hoped I should have been spared this painful humiliation, but since my silence might seem like ingratitude, I will at once open my inmost heart to you. You have a daughter?"

"Who has ever treated you with the consideration of a sister."

"Alas! alas! my lord, 'tis worse, far worse; the serpent that you have nursed

and fostered in your bosom has dared to turn and sting you."

"Whom can you mean?"

"The wretch before you. Yes, my lord, I have loved (unconsciously, it is true) that angel with an affection which I had hoped was only that of a brother a few hours ago. Accident revealed to me my guilt. I love her tenderly and fondly. Now, chase from your presence one who could have acted so basely; load me with reproach; I deserve it all."

The peer was greatly moved. A sudden light seemed to dawn upon him. After a short pause, he turned round and demanded—

"And does Emily reciprocate this passion?"

"Alas! too sincerely. But by no fault of mine. By all I hold dear, till this day I never directly or indirectly ever addressed her otherwise than as a

sister—the cherished daughter of him who has succoured me from childhood. This day, however, the truth became apparent. In a paroxysm of delight on finding myself beloved by her, I confessed my feelings. A moment after, my better self prevailed. Honour bid me fly, and I am here to take a long farewell of your lordship. Emily I cannot dare to see again.”

Lord Urmstone, though deeply wounded, still felt the warmest affection for his adopted son, and his present upright conduct made him more dear than ever.

“Is there no way?”

“No, my lord, none. I have well pondered over it. I alone must be the victim in this sacrifice. ’Tis I who have courted this martyrdom; consequently, I alone must suffer, without fortune, the creature of your bounty.”

“Nay, if riches could avail, you should

share mine, dear boy. But alas! the world."

"The world! The world would say you had given your daughter to the offspring of some low wretch; even too low, too worthless, to put in a claim for his paternity. No; that could never be. Never shall it be said of me. Even the beggar's deserted child would scorn to take advantage of the touching charity which has been so nobly bestowed on him. No; the thought, the very contemplation of such a situation must not be indulged in. It is heart-wounding to the wretched foundling, it would be debasing to the high-born Emily."

"Alas! I fear you are right. What, then, do you intend to do?"

"Within an hour to leave the country for ever."

"And whither go you?"

"Nay, I care not. I have sold out of

the army ; I cannot, therefore, return to that profession ; but, enriched by your lordship's generosity, I can well live anywhere."

"I cannot allow you to act thus—to leave me without some settled plan. Even though separated by distance, I shall ever feel for you as a father ; and if my dear girl marries, you shall return to comfort my declining days."

Poor John winced at the suggestion, but bowed an affirmative.

"In the meantime, I must take parental authority on me, and guide your movements. You may remember Lord Grantchester's anxious desire that you should accept the post of his secretary. Avail yourself of it. I shall then know, at least, that you are well off beneath the roof of a man of trust, honour, and good feeling. I will now go to the drawing-room and see how poor Emily is—I fear she will

suffer from this blow—and then write a letter to my old friend, who will gladly extend a hearty welcome to you. As to you——”

“I will to my chamber and pack up. I will not see Emily; the trial would be too heartrending to bear. In an hour I will return here to obtain your lordship’s letter, and (here his voice became choked with emotion) receive her last words to me, conveyed to me by the lips of my ever dear benefactor.”

And with these words John Leslie hurriedly left the presence of Lord Urmstone.

CHAPTER XXV.

SAFETY IN FLIGHT.

To those who have never crossed from Holyhead to Kingstown in the magnificent steamers which have plied for the last few years on that station, it will be impossible to convey any idea of the superiority of these vessels, which are not only of gigantic proportions, but capable of travelling at a speed of nearly twenty miles an hour, fitted up as floating palaces, the deck guarded from overwhelming seas. The voyager leaves Kingstown harbour at about seven o'clock in the evening, and before eleven finds himself comfortably riding beside Holyhead Pier, on

which a railway has been constructed, and where the mail-train awaits your arrival. Your baggage is shifted from the boat by the porters, and in about a quarter of an hour, without trouble or exertion, you find yourself flying towards London, seated in a railway carriage, at the rate of forty miles an hour, including stoppages.

Into the *Munster*, one of these beautiful ships, poor Leslie hurried. More than one acquaintance saluted him as he passed—more than one endeavoured to detain him; but his feelings were far too sorely lacerated to permit the approach of an ordinary babbler. He hurried on board, sought a spot, whence, undisturbed by his fellow-passengers, he might gaze upon that edifice under whose roof all he held dear resided.

In less than half an hour the whole

landscape had faded away, and Leslie began truly to feel that *she* was for ever lost to him.

It began to rain heavily, and the young captain descended to the cabin, where a party of gentlemen were trying to while away the time by conversation. Leslie would rather have been allowed to reflect in silence over the events of the last twenty hours, but this was impossible. From the state-cabin to the wet deck there was no retreat. So *bon gré, mal gré*, here he must remain, to listen to, or join in, as he might think proper, the story-telling circle, who, over their brandy and cigars, were endeavouring to amuse each other, and shut out the disagreeable howling of the autumnal gale.

“We cut him down. But falling, he received a blow on the back of his head, which injured him for life. It has given

me a horror of practical jokes," added the narrator, who thus brought to a conclusion a tale he had been telling.

"They generally end badly," chimed in a gentleman with red hair.

"I would as soon sit in company with a royal tiger as a practical joker," gravely said a pale gentleman who sat in the corner; "one of my friends has, indeed, been fatally affected by one of this class of amusements."

"How so?" asked the gentleman with the vegetable top-knot; "how so? do you really so sincerely dislike this sort of fun?"

"I'll tell you," replied the other. "Of all the nuisances which exist in a social circle, I cannot but look upon the practical joker as the worst. To carry out what he styles his fun, he is ready to sacrifice everything. His practical jokes, for the moment, may, it is true,

raise a laugh, but in ten cases out of twelve they end badly. Jim Seaford (a friend of mine) loved a hearty laugh, and he foolishly believed that the best way of raising one was to do so at the expense of some friend. One day, an old uncle, from whom he had considerable expectations, dined at his father's table. He was a stiff old martinet, pompous in manner, and rigid as a ramrod. He wore a high stock, polished boots, and a most elaborately-dressed wig. He bored everybody with his old military anecdotes, which, though often repeated, were always hailed with applause; the key to this enigma being the fact that old Colonel —— had a landed estate of 7000*l.* a year, which, as he was now above sixty years of age, must soon benefit his family and friends. His nephew Jim, however, was positively to have the estate. Now Jim was full of fun, and determined to do a most

laughable thing; so he tutored a little boy of five years old, a cousin of his, in the art of practical joking. Nor was there a more apt scholar; for that day, when admitted to dessert, he stole behind the colonel's chair, and suddenly pulled off his wig. The party at first burst out laughing, but seeing the old fellow's rage, they instantly became calm. The culprit was seized, and in his fright betrayed his instructor. The consequences were evident. The child was sent to a boarding-school, as a present propitiation, and Jim was disinherited, as an example to all 'funny men.' He lost at least 100,000*l.*, and a probable seat in Parliament. He is now a clerk in an attorney's office at 80*l.* a year, but then he has the satisfaction of reflecting that it was a 'capital lark.'

"Mark Thompson, a professor of these amusing antics, took a dislike to an old maid who lived opposite to him. So, one

fine morning, he ordered every tradesman in the neighbourhood to supply her with certain articles on the following day. Of course he did this without being discovered. He sent the commands in her name, in short notes addressed to each. Never was there such fun ; he almost died with laughter when he saw the success of his hoax. There was the butcher, the milliner, the undertaker, a post-carriage from Newman's, and a hearse from Shillibeer's. Next came the sleek butler in search of situation ; furniture of every description, a parrot and a bull-dog. In a word the whole street was blocked up with the enraged tradesmen drawn thither by the supposed orders of Miss ——. Mark had a couple of 'fast' youths to breakfast with him, who enjoyed the scene and applauded Mark's ingenuity. Whether the hoaxer himself or either of these friends were indiscreet enough to allow

the secret to percolate, I know not, but—but certain it is—about twenty lawyers' letters arrived within a week, each more furious than the other. Mark began now to see that a practical jest may sometimes be reversed, and tried to allay the storm. At length, after much trouble and serious anxiety, he succeeded, at the cost of some of his pride and a sum of 150*l.*, in calming the ire of the hoaxed tradespeople, and in a somewhat lowered tone he was about to leave town, when he received a dry note from Miss S——'s solicitor. Here was quite a new feature—a new difficulty, not to be overcome. So, after trying everything else, he had to humble his pride and throw himself on the mercy of that lady, who allowed herself to be so far mollified that she gave up her action, after proving to Mr. Thompson that, if she thought fit, she could indict him for forgery, on condition that he twice

inserted a most humble apology in the *Times*, and gave 100*l.* to the Middlesex Hospital. So Mark was compelled to consent to all this, the alternative being a flight for ever from his country. So he apologized, and paid, retired into the provinces, and always leaves the room when practical jokes are spoken of.

“Tom Maxey, of the Hussars, was so brimful of fun, that one night he stole into Captain Smith’s stable, and cut off, that is, squared to the root, the magnificent long tail of Smith’s Arabian charger. The next day Tom stayed in barracks all day, for he fully expected he should be suspected, and called out in consequence. He therefore remained in quarters in order to receive the challenge, and, if possible, get out of it. If this could not be effected, he would stand a shot; such a capital joke was worth it. The whole day passed, but no message came. He

inquired, and found that Captain Smith had gone to London with the commanding officer. He did not like this, but as officers often run up from Hounslow, it was no great matter of surprise; but he did feel astonished that Smith had made no stir on the subject. All passed off quietly. The next morning, however, the adjutant appeared at his door, and requested him to deliver up his sword. At the same time, he handed him a written paper, a paper styled in military parlance 'a crime.' It ran thus:—

“ ‘Lieutenant Thomas Maxey, of the — Hussars, will be tried on the following charge:—For conduct unbecoming an officer and a gentleman, in stealing into Captain Smith’s stables after dark on the night of the 12th instant, and then and there disfiguring and injuring a valuable Arabian horse, the same being the first charger of Captain Smith.

“ ‘Secondly, For passing a bad half-crown, knowing the same to be spurious, in payment of cab hire.

“ ‘Thirdly, For dropping a quantity of pepper into an old washerwoman’s tea, who came into barracks in the exercise of her duty, and thereby causing her an illness of three days.’

“ ‘So now, my dear friend,’ added the adjutant, ‘you had better prepare, as the court is to assemble on Friday, unless, indeed, you prefer resigning at once.’

“Maxey eagerly embraced the suggestion. He is a collecting clerk to a respectable wine-merchant.”

The narrator had scarcely concluded his sketches, which were highly relished by his auditors, when a loud clamour on deck called everyone up from the cabin. Arrived here, they found the agitated commander of the vessel giving orders to stop the ship, and at once to lower one of

the boats. These orders were obeyed with a celerity only known to British sailors. But, even before the boat touched the water, we were all informed that a passenger had fallen overboard.

In less than ten minutes a sudden rush to the side of the steamer made everyone aware that the seamen had succeeded in their task. But alas! too late. The poor fellow's head had been struck by the flange of the paddle-wheel, and they now handed up the somewhat mutilated corpse of an individual, who from his dress was instantly perceived to be a clergyman of the Church of England. Leslie immediately recognised a gentleman he had seen drinking more than one glass of brandy and water; but, as this is frequently done in the vain hope of checking sea-sickness, he had scarcely remarked the circumstance. The body having been removed to the captain's cabin, a strict

inquiry as to the mode in which the accident had occurred was instantly made, but without any satisfactory result.

Presently the commander came forward and requested that all further investigations might cease, as he had privately ascertained how the misfortune had arisen. The sailors, with the majority of the passengers, scattered themselves about; the captain beckoned a few of the most respectable persons by whom he was still surrounded into his cabin, and showed them the following paper, which had been taken from the dead man's pocket, having evidently been placed there for the purpose of being found:—

“The act is my own. I have come to the resolution of committing suicide. I am neither agitated, nor am I mentally deluded. I calmly resolve to get rid of a life which has become a burthen to me. Make as little noise about it as may be

compatible with your duty. Send the luggage I have on board to my brother's. Address ——."

Those who heard the letter read, looked awfully shocked. Leslie now found his privacy no longer disturbed. He turned away, and began seriously to weigh the advantages of life. But though for a moment he felt inclined to doubt its benefits, yet youth and good spirits soon overcame the feelings of a cynic, and, ere he arrived at Holyhead, hope once more took up her abode in his heart.

CHAPTER XXVI.

THE RAILWAY.

ON arriving at the pier, the London train was found waiting for the passengers, who, in less than a quarter of an hour, were safely stowed away in their respective carriages, their baggage having been removed from the vessel and placed on the van by porters belonging to the railway company. Without exertion—even without the trouble of overlooking the transfer, all the luggage had been safely deposited in the train, which, in less than twenty minutes after the arrival of the vessel, was in full swing, flying at the rate of some forty or fifty miles an hour towards the British metropolis.

Opposite our hero sat a grave-looking old gentleman, whose countenance bespoke extreme intelligence. In the opposite corner sat a remarkably handsome woman of a certain age. She was dressed in the very height of the fashion. Her fingers were covered with rings of the most magnificent description; a splendid watch was hung around her neck. She was evidently a lady of rank and wealth. A somewhat snobbish man sat next to her, who paid her considerable attention. Whether he was an old friend of the fair lady, or a mere travelling acquaintance, Leslie could not decide. But one thing was certain—he had evidently won the good opinion of his *compagnon de voyage*, who seemed both pleased and dazzled by the continuous and brilliant conversation of the gentleman in question. The older individual, who had evidently travelled, and by so doing had thrown off

the *mauvaise honte* of an ordinary English traveller, politely accosted Leslie, who was not long in discovering that his neighbour was one of the very few specimens of the "Irish gentleman" left to remind us that Erin once boasted the most polite, the best-read, the kindest-hearted men that ever existed. Our hero then gladly entered into conversation with his fellow-passenger, leaving the fascinating young man in the opposite corner and his handsome neighbour to carry on their flirtation (for it really seemed worthy of this designation) without fear of interruption.

"You are not an Irishman, I presume?" inquiringly demanded the old traveller. "From your accent, I should suppose you were a pure Saxon, as we love to call our fellow-countrymen on this side of the Channel."

"Most true. I have only recently

visited the sister isle for a few months, and shall probably never return."

"And how did you like your residence there?"

"Living under the roof of my dearest friend, I was thoroughly happy."

"I rather wished to know your opinion of our people and their ways?"

"To confess the truth, I had but few opportunities of judging."

"I am happy to hear you say so. I am delighted that you have not fallen into the common mistake, which your countrymen are somewhat apt to make. Because we tattle freely, and as freely state our views, the visitor believes he can thoroughly read our character, and discover our precise condition."

"This is indeed an error."

"Indeed it is. I have known many, many Englishmen, who have publicly declared that they thoroughly understood

our people; that they not only had ascertained the amount of misgovernment on both sides of the Channel, but also proudly boasted that they had discovered, and should some day 'or other offer to the nation, their panacea for all the existing evils. These politicians had probably not been above six months in our country. The same individuals, some twelve months later, began to doubt the correctness of their views, and, long ere they left our shores to return to England, they one and all—at least, all those who possessed common sense and truth—declared that they knew nothing at all about it, and that the evils of Ireland were of that chameleon nature, that the appearance of them varied from day to day."

"I believe they have been much improved during the last quarter of a century."

"No nation ever equalled us in this

respect. The rollicking, good-hearted, thoughtless squire described by Lever in his works, no longer exists; the Encumbered Estates Bill has swept away this class, and compelled men to live prudently, or to sell their broad lands. This must naturally restrict the wide hospitality, once the boast of Ireland. The landlord who now receives his rents with a punctuality not surpassed in any country in the world, is naturally called upon to pay ready money to his tradespeople. Now, sir, an Irishman would feed you on gold and silver, if it could be done, to prove his friendship. His house, his servants, his horses, and his table are yours, so long as he does not let his cash pass away; but when he is called upon to draw money from his purse, or to sign a cheque on his banker, his whole character alters, and he at once turns from reckless expenditure to wretched parsimony. He

is still kind, hospitable, and good-hearted—he cares not about giving that which cash has obtained ; but cash itself he has a horror of parting with. While Irishmen, like Indian officers, never saw or touched money, merely ordering luxuries to spring up which their agents paid for (who, by-the-by, in many instances, were enabled, in a series of years, to become the proprietors or mortgagees of estates they were agents to), Irishmen were all generosity. But now that they dispense their own money in Ireland, and look after their own accounts in India, hospitality, it must be confessed, has seriously faded away.”

“ These are the gentry, I presume? What of your commercial classes? I have heard of several large fortunes made in Ireland.”

“ A better field for profitable speculation does not exist. But I regret to say a small portion of the old national pride

still lingers, and a country gentleman—rich or poor—hesitates long before he consents to establish his child in trade. The consequence is obvious—Scotch and English adventurers (I make use of the term as a term of trade, not as a slight) have come over to Dublin and to our principal cities, and opened monster establishments in which they have earned very large fortunes. Amongst our own people, but few Irishmen of undoubted respectability and moderate capital have risen high in commerce. Labourers on railways have by diligence (it is true) become contractors, and as contractors amassed princely fortunes—bricklayers have become builders, and built whole towns and villages—money-lenders have died very rich—but none of them have begun with any capital, and by steady perseverance arrived at wealth; a man with money would scorn to enter into

trade. If such persons could be led to follow commercial pursuits, they would easily make fortunes. But here, as elsewhere, pride proves itself the bane of Ireland."

"And the lower orders?"

"As far as steadiness goes, they are much improved, but their wit and joviality have passed away—with sobriety reflection has come in—and these reflections, though they guard them against intemperance and extravagance, are very apt to make them suspicious and discontented with their lot. The power of the priesthood is greatly diminished—men now begin to think and act for themselves. As a Protestant, I know I ought to rejoice at this; but in honest truth, the result does not improve the people—the example and advice of an honest and intelligent pastor decidedly kept them in check better than their lay-meetings and self-will. An Irish

peasant, though strong and active when he chooses, is decidedly an enemy to hard work ; he can affect simplicity and stupidity, but believe me, a more intelligent and cunning being does not exist than he who, while he is seeming to strive to catch your meaning, is all the time endeavouring to read your character and discover how far he can get the best of you. But here I must pause; I see we are nearly arrived at Chester, where I leave this train for the purpose of proceeding to the North. I sincerely hope, sir, we may meet again ;” and with a bow which would have done honour to George the Fourth, he closed the conversation.

Leslie could scarcely credit the fact, as they steamed into the vast station erected at Chester. The train had actually traversed the whole of North Wales at the rate of fifty miles an hour. Our hero was almost inclined to believe that their speed

had been still greater, for it seemed to him —amused as he had been by the old gentleman's sketch of his countrymen—that he had not been an hour on the road.

The lady and the Irishman had both got out, and the usual noise around, of screaming porters, jarring wheels, and slamming doors, had already begun to grow less, when the fair traveller rushed to the carriage door, accompanied by a porter, and in eager tones asked whether anyone had seen her watch. The railway servant introduced a lantern, and searched the seats and the floor of the carriage without success. The lady was in despair; the bauble was valuable—but that was nothing; it had been the gift of her deceased husband, and it broke her heart to lose it. The gentleman who had conversed with her appeared deeply to sympathize with her, and assisted most earnestly in the search; but all in vain.

Just then the guard in charge came up—the loss was reported to him. He held high his lamp, and looked into the carriage. Something seemed suddenly to strike him. He turned round abruptly to the lady, and said, in a short manner, “I’m very sorry, ma’am, but I fear you’ll never see your watch again; but it’s not my business. Stand back, ma’am. Time’s up.” He violently shut the door, gave a loud whistle, and they were once more racing with the pigeons of the air.







